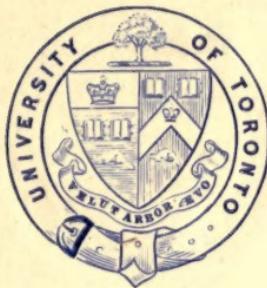


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WILLIAM A. QUAYLE



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# Recovered Yesterdays in Literature

BY  
**WILLIAM A. QUAYLE**



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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. SHAKESPEARE'S MEN .....	7
II. THE LITERATURE OF NATURE .....	45
III. SELFISH WOMANHOOD.....	74
IV. TENNYSON'S MEN .....	88
V. ON READING BEAUTIFUL BOOKS.....	145
VI. A POET CHRYSOSTOM .....	162
VII. RECOVERED YESTERDAYS.....	186
VIII. THE LITERATURE OF DEVOTION .....	204
IX. ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA .....	228



# I

## SHAKESPEARE'S MEN

IN Shakespeare was an abundant love of life. The vital streams had not run dry in the channels of his spirit, rather were in spring freshet, overflowing the banks and inundating meadow lands and fields. When Shakespeare touches us we feel a vital shock, as if an electrode of the lightning had, in passing, grasped our wrists. He is no dyspeptic, with hung head and dolorous voice and mendacious replies and invective speech. He does not rage as Walter Savage Landor did, is not bellicose with sword at play as Shelley was, nor mild and remote as Wordsworth. He was impassioned as the storm, but sane and wholesome; he was like contact with the earth.

Charles Lamb—pale, slender, cloaked, nervous, stammering, playful, a delightful sort of human kitten, on his way now from the East India countinghouse to his half-mad, crabbed old father and Mary his sister, with insanity haunting her eyes—is loitering a moment buying at the Strand a volume of old plays and hiding it like a miser's treasure beneath his cloak. Coleridge is complaisant, ethereal, discursive, bland, imperturbable, mild, with thought-orbit

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

like the sweep of a planet, and is dreaming aloud in a conversation in which there are no associates. Keats—pale, reticent, invalid, a sensitive plant among poets and men, of classic thought, a Greek born centuries after the days of Greek intellectual supremacy—is holding dialogue with Endymion and Hyperion and Lamia until his pale face flushes like a girl's. Byron—tyrannical, scowling, revengeful, riding hard like an angry bandit—is cursing till his breath is spent. Chaucer—observant, buoyant, piquant, clad in the garment of a king's follower—drinks his wine which comes as part of his laureate stipend, mixes with courtier and soldier, well content, hearing, seeing, enjoying, rejoicing. Spenser is prisoner in the land of lotus-eaters, and sees the drift of blue smoke over distant hills, and hears the calling of the sea and of the wind, and thinks this world a picture. Tennyson—sad, dreamy, remote, feeling the world he does not see, looking eagerly “to where beyond these voices there is peace”—chants to himself and not to us,

And may there be no moaning of the bar  
When I put out to sea.

Shakespeare—radiant, delightful, amused, careering like a yacht with favoring wind, laughing aloud without assigning reason for his laughter, intoxicated with the world he wanders in, as if it were old wine—is pleased with everything as on a holiday. He is as a country boy in town.

## SHAKESPEARE'S MEN

Everything interests him. Flower, schoolboy with "morning face," beggar, prince, king, knave, slattern, fool, the pure, the debauched, the railer, the madman, the ingrate, the intriguer, the proud pine, the dim violet, an accusing conscience, the cliff that leans seaward and lifts heavenward; Falstaff and Pistol and Prince Hal, the lad Arthur and the bawd, Mistress Quickly, the moonlit bank, the "sere, the yellow leaf;" the whiteness of Imogen and the black darkness of Iachimo—Shakespeare saw them all and was interested in them all. So it is nature or man or ghost, all is well with him, for he belonged to the brood of discoverers, Gilbert and Drake and Cabot and Raleigh and Hudson; only he discovered men—they, island and river and continent and inland sea. Not one among that glorious company was more adventurous than he. Like them he adventured on the uncharted seas. He sails on all waters, enters all harbors, lands at all ports, his pennant floating at the mast far as adventure dares to sail. Shakespeare's coat-of-arms would be, were I his herald, an archer with quiver full and the bow bent with arrow fitted on the string and all the air full of a shower of arrows. That should be his coat-of-arms and appear upon his banner. At every port of soul, however late one visits it or early, will be found Shakespeare's gonfalon floating there. He seems ubiquitous. His knowledge of the soul dazzles us like some great light. I

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

feel more and more, as I consort with him, that he saw everything and that his scrutiny cannot be eluded. He does not need to look to see, but sees without that crude contrivance. A study of "Henry IV" will convince any skeptic that nothing is hidden from Shakespeare's eyes, whether he look or not. In this play and its successor, "Henry V," we are let into the very privacy of kings. We look them in the face and answer word for word. What they are we know. Shakespeare tells us. Do we not see Henry Bolingbroke and Prince Hal? Are they not in truth become among the familiars of our household? Their cares, ambitions, anguishes, fears, tremors, stratagems, policies, alliances, court manners, privacies, and publicities; their glowing patriotism and barren selfishness; their thought's prologue, monologue, epilogue; their coronation gladness and gasping advices on a dying bed—were we not made privy to them all, as if we were gentlemen of the king's bed-chamber? These two plays are dramas of royalty, and are hung about with king's banners and helmets and shields. True as this observation is, more is to be said if all the truth is to be uttered. England's two worlds are in these plays. The king's world of court, palace, queenly women, courtier, battlefield, debaucheries, royal wooing, waving banners, and the march—this king's world is here; and, besides, here is an under-world of Justice Shallow, with his farming and

## SHAKESPEARE'S MEN

turnip crops and old beau speech and justice court and money-loaning and the tavern with its sack and bawds and bullies and grim humors and rollicking laughter and drunken quarrels—this underworld with shabby patriots and enlistments and cowardice and lechery, inanity, animosities, braggart speech, and craven retreats, contumacies, arrogancies, conceits. This England, too, is seen, not as through the dust of a summer's highway, but clearly as through air after a rain. I know not which is more admirable, Shakespeare's etching of the court or the tavern, his king's antechamber or his justice court. This double world that always lives and will live—Shakespeare is its biographer, and a sturdy Boswell he proves himself to be. The entire landscape is his. Nature, man, patrician, plebeian, honor, disgrace—this writer of plays knows them all, and calls each by his name as if each were comrade. All zones are his. He loved every sign in the zodiac, and claimed each season as his favorite. Everything and everybody reported to him; he was receiving station for the world.

And he loved mankind. While not physicist nor psychologist nor politician, he was interested. Everybody impressed him. His was the art of extracting secrets, of inspiring confidences. Everybody told him his story, for this, among other reasons, he was a royal listener, and into this willing ear Juliet sobbed her story, and Timon of Athens trumpeted his hate. Falstaff swaggered

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

and drank and swore and lied to Shakespeare as to Prince Hal or carbuncle-nosed Bardolph; Marc Antony made no secret of his passion, such as made a scepter inconsequential; Macbeth stamped out his ravings in Shakespeare's presence; and Lady Macbeth walked with her lit candle in her hand so close to the poet he might have touched her; and Hamlet heeds him not what time he makes soliloquy; Lear curses his two daughters with scarce an intermission; Regan speaks her flint-hard words, nor cares that Shakespeare hears; Pericles weeps before him—he is confidant of this divergent company. Dogberry and Malvolio and King Lear's fool and Launce and Justice Shallow and Iago and Leontes and Pandarus, Bassanio and Antonio and Shylock, Nym, Pistol, Bottom, Oberon, Angelo—besides all that sweet company of fair womanhood whispering or sobbing their story forth—they are every one voluble with him, showing no reticence, or next to none; and he hears, sees all, and forgets nothing.

Shakespeare loves men and women, though, as for loving women, what man does not? I think no man has ever loved women more than he, and I am quite sure no poet has. He has loved them so as to make many of them queens regnant forever, and has joyed to lift them into the heaven of the heroic and leave them there. My wonder is not at this, but that he so evidently loved men, and with such tropic warmth. He straitly enjoys them, sees their strength, applauds them so you

## SHAKESPEARE'S MEN

can hear him crying, "Bravo, bravo," as one who watches a wrestler's skill, but strangely enough has not a hero among them, which is one of the strangest things in strange Shakespeare. His women have many heroines, his men have no heroes, howbeit he loves them both. How is this condition to be explained? Mayhap Shakespeare's vast chivalry is key to this exclusiveness of elevation in womanhood. Even Mistress Quickly he has dignified by making her in many regards the most bewildering feminine character his genius has produced. She is not admirable, but is anomalous and marvelous, and is in genius of execution sister to Falstaff. To explain this partiality in Shakespeare puts us at our wits' ends, and to no avail. The fact remains, however the explanation halts. Among his men, giants as many of them are, is not a hero, so far as I have found; and certainly, if we were writing a biography of heroes, not one of Shakespeare's men would find a place in the book. When the *Odysssey* is read, Ulysses is seen an intended hero. For his statue the poem is pedestal; but does any man in Shakespeare impress us so? Sometimes we are told that Falconbridge and King Henry V are heroes. They may be. No absolute rule determining a hero has been prescribed. Here we wander at will, as butterflies do on sunny days. No one can say nay to our claims, be they what they may. I find in both the men named some heroic, notable qualities, but I should never think

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

of them as heroes. Henry is a soldier, outward bound for conquest, and is brusque and soldierlike in war and wooing, as Shakespeare has him, while the drama is fairly chanted to the tune of battle marches. All this I cheerfully concede, at the same breath insisting that Henry is somewhat lost on the field of England's growing greatness; we feel not Henry so much as we feel England, he being sword and voice for England's sword and England's voice. For myself I cannot feel him. He never grasps me as a warrior grasps an enemy and bears him down. Columbus and Magellan and Raleigh dig their spurs into my sides till the blood starts, but Henry might be a paper man for all his might with me. He sailed with England over seas and conspired with her triumph, but Shakespeare is playing a triumphal march, not for the king but for the kingdom. Henry is not so impressive as king as he was as Prince Hal. The king has lost in blood and heart, and gained in statesmanship. My feeling, as well as my thinking, dissent to Henry being counted Shakespeare's hero or any other body's hero, for that matter. He is soldier like Marc Antony saving in this, Antony stirs the blood, while Henry is almost a sedative. He is aware he is now a king, and his self-consciousness warps his courtesy and manlier parts, and he wears it like his crown and royal garment. His dismissal of Falstaff is so cold, so kingly in its heartlessness as to make us resent it for Falstaff's sake, not as loving him, but that we

## SHAKESPEARE'S MEN

feel the perfidy of the king even as the sad Falstaff did. His forgetfulness is so utilitarian that his face is in eclipse. He may not rank as hero for the heart.

One might have expected Julius Cæsar to be hero, since he was most apt for such a part of all the men who take rank in these dramas, when, digging deep into the play, we find our theory disconcerted by the presentation in that most of Cæsar's career is presented in epilogues, Antony or Cassius telling of it in strict seclusions or on the housetop of the Forum; and on the face of this past master of the Roman world is scarce the glow of triumph, not to say the proud light of a premeditated hero. Or, if there be a hero among his men, not Hamlet nor Falconbridge nor Henry V nor Prospero is he, but Falstaff, whom, if Shakespeare did not love and linger over as over no other man he has fashioned, I miss his bearing utterly.

If Shakespeare, however, exalted no man into the heaven of heroes, neither did he show any antipathy toward any man. He was without favorites, so far as touches his ecstasy over any special pleading for any. We may put the case thus—Shakespeare enjoyed all almost alike and was disinterested in attitude toward all his creations, unless there be a shadow of favor for Falstaff, for I cannot drown my conviction that into the minute working out of the jesting Sir John Shakespeare put an enjoyment unknown to any

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

male character in his plays. He is without favorites in the sense that he was unfair with none, representing each as he was. He enjoyed men and women, and admired genius, achievement, thought, love; but I defy anybody to say whether he loved Othello or Iago more. I lean to believing he loved Iago more. Yet, why waste guesses? This is simple surmise. Thackeray loved Becky Sharpe better than anyone in "Vanity Fair," she being the one and only one at whom he did not poke fun. She was dangerous as a poisoned stiletto. Can we tell what thing he created pleased Michael Angelo most? His frescoes, or his David, or Moses, or Dawn, or the sky-dome of Saint Peter's? So we cannot tell with any assurance what man Shakespeare liked most. He treats all fairly, and is as courteous as Raleigh to each of them; but bias toward any is barely visible, if at all—certainly not so visible as that any may assert, "This man he favors and this man he dislikes." He detests nobody, not Iachimo nor Angelo nor Iago. In Shakespeare is nothing vindictive as in Dante, who with a grim urbanity lifts his friends into heaven and drops his enemies into hell—a procedure touched with a baleful humor, though Dante was not cognizant of it. He was too severe to be just. Those who expatriated him must be damned as certainly as if God had decreed the sentence. That unsmiling poet had made a grim potentate whose ears had been deaf to petitions for mercy and whose acts had been maledictions. Shakespeare has

## SHAKESPEARE'S MEN

neither hell nor paradise; he has earth, and his men are here and only here, for King Hamlet is a ghost at best, and his voice is husky and his words inept and sorely uncertain. Shakespeare is no advocate; he is fashioner. What does he think of Hamlet? Nobody knows. Is he making sport of him, or castigating him, or pitying him, or enthroning him? Does he think Marc Antony a fool to barter away a world for a woman's kiss, or does he envy him? Who knows? What does he think of Shylock? Does he favor Shylock or Antonio? This Shakespearean faculty of expressing no preference is astonishing and without parallel. Ask him to tell whom he prefers and he will smile at us, as at a foolish child and will make no answer. The truth is, the artist is dominant in him, and he enjoys his men because they are men and for no other reason. Life delights him, as it does kittens and birds. The self-explication of a soul is what charms him. Mommsen hates Cicero, and deifies Cæsar; but Shakespeare will have no demigods, and will maintain so absolute an impartiality as that we cannot break through his reserve. What he at any moment has delights him as a child is delighted alternately with doll and picture book and drawing with colored chalks and playing school and writing expectant letters to Santa Claus; and that is the end of what we may safely say of Shakespeare's preference. Caliban and Ariel and Prospero, and shipwrecked king and raging seas flecked with debris of wreck, and Mi-

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

randa and Ferdinand—all are dear to him as children to a sire.

In "Henry VIII" strict impartiality and absolute truthfulness are exemplified in a striking manner. Whether the drama was written during the life of Elizabeth or in the reign of James is not material, inasmuch as to neither of these sovereigns would extolling Katherine be palatable. Plainly a courtier's task would have been to have glossed the ruffian coarseness of Henry VIII, for he was Elizabeth's father, and to have painted in colors unfadingly glowing the character of Anne Boleyn, for she was Elizabeth's mother. Who composed this play was not a courtier, meant though it is to glorify Elizabeth. If ever a poet was under bonds to be fulsome in praise and full of innuendo toward those who were antagonists to the reigning sovereign, Shakespeare was such poet, when he wrote this triumphal ode to Queen Elizabeth. What to expect under the circumstances we readily see, which expected thing is precisely what does not happen; for Henry is not lauded, but stands out all but totally unlovely. His vices announce themselves in his face. His brutality, heartlessness, concupiscence, repugnant egotism, and autocracy all blossomed in him, so that to even an imperfect sight they are apparent. Shakespeare does neither adorn nor praise him, but holds him up in naked blameworthiness, to speak and answer for himself. We had supposed Katherine had been blamed, would be belittled by look or

## SHAKESPEARE'S MEN

gesture, for such treatment the case apparently imperatively demands, whereas, instead she is pictured one of the sweetest women whose heart ever knelt to kiss a husband's hand. Her words, soaked with tears, are honey-sweet, and she stands as if she were the queen of grief, nor ever in her days of pomp and circumstance was she so queenly. How more than strange such presentation in one who is telling a story for the ears of those whose fortunes are grown out of the grave of her calamities. And Anne Boleyn is not lauded; rather she is discovered to be a weak, vain woman, selfish and lacking in moral stamina, yet human and feminine, and she stands in shamed contrast to Katherine. If this be not anomalous in him who is lauding her daughter, I do not know the meaning of anomaly. In painting Wolsey, we who loathed him when Queen Katherine turns her tear-dimmed face, and with her quivering woman's lips calls him her enemy set to do her hurt—this spent glory that once was premier puissant we pity, and execrate his master as ingrate and unkingly; and this Elizabeth's father so dethroned from our respect and love. These remarks may serve to justify the claim that Shakespeare was "without partiality and without hypocrisy."

Nor has Shakespeare a specifically good man. Edgar, Pericles, Prospero, Valentine, of the "Two Gentlemen of Verona," Kent, Horatio, Leonatus are clean men and wholesome. So is Hamlet. That they are contrived for good men, however,

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

would never suggest itself to a careful reader. Shakespeare has bad men, weak men, execrable men, men of prodigal genius, dominant personalities, whirlwinds of power and conquest, laudable men, men not evil, negatively good men; but good men, such as might sit for a picture of goodness, as Colonel Newcome, there is not one of, or, if there be, I know not who he is. Shakespeare is not in this sense moral in purpose. The great moral contentions never wrought havoc in his soul, as fierce armies on a battle ground. The Puritan rectitude and duty did not thrill him to the center. Milton, poet of duty, had not been palatable to Shakespeare, I think, and certainly had not been comprehensible; while, to have pivoted two epics on sin and sin's conquest over man, or sin and man's conquest over sin, as Milton did in "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained," or as Bunyan did in "Pilgrim's Progress," is unthinkable of him. Intense moral earnestness is not apparent in him. Those throes which make the travail of a mountain's birth frivolous in comparison belong not to this wide-horizoned dramatist. Raleigh and Shakespeare are brothers of one house in their reflection of their generation, and they glow as a city illuminated on a gala night. They did not take religion too much to heart, leastwise not in such fashion as to create earthquake shocks of moral and political upheavals and revolutions and renovations, or lead them with laughing hearts to the martyr's flames. They are, in short, children of

## SHAKESPEARE'S MEN

their era, and look as if they had been fathered by the Greek gods. I do not suggest that Shakespeare's dramatic bias was immoral. That is remotest from what he is. His was a genius-perception that evil told against the evildoer; but, whether he ever approved goodness as goodness and for its own sake, I for one cannot tell, but gravely doubt. He is exact contrary of being immoral. I have found him one of the cleanest writers in all literature. He has no rejoicing in filth and pruriency and debauchery. Coarse he was, when measured by our higher standards, because he did not wholly rise—though he rose far—above his age in this regard. He is no voluptuary; is always sensuous—as Milton would have the poet be—but never sensual. I do not impugn Shakespeare nor his motive; I only hold to the atmosphere of his poetry in insisting on his inability to conceive goodness in such measure and with such regard as appears in the literature of our century; for, indeed, that viewpoint belongs to our century and not to his. Free will he knew and believed in; vice he saw and knew; virtue he beheld and pictured; but, as to what he thought of the two, his reticence remains, and of a good man like Job there is no trace in Shakespeare, or that he ever thought of such a man is dubious. By this phrase "good man" I understand a man whose controlling impulse is God and who would honestly translate him into the common vernacular of life. Such a man Shakespeare never did portray,

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

nor, in my judgment, could have done so, had he tried. In him is always apparent a tidal movement against vice and for virtue. He knew the soul's life too intimately to defy conscience or deny a single stab of its envenomed sword, but such attitude is far removed from a determinate and glowing allegiance to love and God and a career of human betterment. Nor must we confound his justice element with the question now under consideration. To this justice idea he was always true, just as sunlight would be true to tell the whole story of any figure taken in a picture. In Angelo, of "Measure for Measure," we note this love of and fealty to justice. In "Richard III," whose conscience, pinioned and gagged by day, is free and tempest-toned by night; in Macbeth's growing and childish credulity on the one side and his bloody tournament with murdered Banquo on the other; in the grim soldier justice with which Bardolph and Nym are hung as common thieves while enlisted soldiers fighting for England in foreign wars—though we have spent many an idle hour in hearing and seeing them in revels with obese Sir John—and Pistol, the braggart coward, is let slink home a pimp and vagabond and parasite; and most of all in Falstaff—lord of laughter and penetrative jest—who by and by falls to the shamed level of being a booby tricked by country wives, in these we see how just as fate Shakespeare was. He would not sin against the central verities; though to love a man like Bunyan or even Edmund

## SHAKESPEARE'S MEN

Spenser—idealizing virtue in his music-making rhymes—is not in him. No man of simple, sweet, human goodness ever walked onto Shakespeare's stage and had his coronation.

Shakespeare's men are sufficient to the point of greatness. As characters they are superb. He has slighted no one of them, having done like the builders of mediæval cathedrals, who finished every part, however remote, concealed, insignificant, with laborious detail and skill. Each man stands full height, himself. This is true of his women as well, as will witness any of the delineations, selecting at random. Are not the merry wives of Windsor as clearly disclosed in personality as Ophelia or as complete a portrait as Rosalind? This accuracy goes further. Launce and his dog Crab are as minute engravings as Romeo. Never was beast more completely identified with man than here, and as between owner and dog we are apt to enjoy the scrubby dog the more, and—as not infrequently occurs—whatever we think of the master, we admire the cur. Shakespeare was as pains-taking as Balzac, with this difference—the difference between talent and genius. Balzac is always taking pains, Shakespeare is never taking pains, yet is as encyclopedic in attention to details of finish as if he has passed years in study of that single object of creation. Shakespeare is as a gifted speaker whose words flow out, beautiful and abundant as light and with no more effort. A painter, as I suppose, could paint a likeness of any

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

person validly introduced into the plays as readily as if the subject sat before him, so sufficient are the lines of face and figure of character; as, for instance, the murderers in "Macbeth," who are much more than voice and shadow, with murderous intent and execution, with spiteless but venomous thrust. Two murderers have this cursed business in their hands, when, at the bloody tryst, appears an unanticipated third, and, though he is in darkness and his face is hid and name unknown, and his voice never poised above a hoarse whisper, we see him as in a lurid light. Whoever he is, leadership and a stony, settled purpose are in him, and his face is hard, his eyes cold, his lips tightened together in spiteless and unpitying determination when the horses' hoofs make merry on the darkened road up which the unsuspecting victim rides. And Hubert, in "King John," premeditated ruffian to burn out sweet Arthur's eyes—why he is visible as dawn, so that an artist could paint him as if a hundred sittings had been afforded. In Shakespeare is the efficiency of the mighty artists, who, with a few strokes of the brush, limn a face with accuracy and illumination. Kipling has this gift in a high degree; but Shakespeare is without a peer in this field, as in many others. Cordelia, in the tragedy of "King Lear," is given slighter heed than the king's fool. She appears, is angered at her sister's hypocritical protestations of love, speaks to the angering of her father, is driven from his presence by the whirlwind of his wrath, is

## SHAKESPEARE'S MEN

wedded to the king of France, comes back with an army to win back Lear's crown for him, bends above her father's sleeping face what time she woos him back from madness, and is borne dead by the decrepit, winter-white Lear back from her death. "The rest is silence," and yet she suffuses the play as crimson light the skies and clouds and waves on summer evenings. Any artist can see her, and if he fail in painting her, the failure arises not because he does not see her with all sufficiency. She sits as throned in sunlight, and she was only a fair girl-shadow passing across our pathway in timorous haste.

And the grave diggers in "Hamlet," yokels as they are, we feel acquainted with them as if they had been our neighbors many years. Their pithy and unfeeling words might drop from lips much more modern than themselves. The scene is unique, and they preempt the scene as a bride preempts attention at a marriage, for Hamlet is a lesser figure than they while he holds converse with them, they filling the hour even as they occupy the grave. The grave making ready for the fair Ophelia, the growing mound of damp earth their spades are making; their jesting talk, their cloddy indifference to the heartbreak of the occasion; their decision gravely reached that, seeing "the crowner hath set on her, and finds it Christian burial," they may with clear conscience dig her grave; the apostrophe to the spade and to themselves; the proposal of a conundrum—which in

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

anybody could be accounted one of the cardinal sins; one calling to the other in mandatory voice, "Fetch a stoup of liquor," his singing a rude love ditty while he lightly throws out the earth and therewith a skull which, after much badinage, Hamlet finds to be "Yorick's skull, the king's jester"—have done, do we not know the grave diggers so as to hear, see, feel them? Or the witches in Macbeth, with their hellbroth brewing, their hairy chins, their crooked beaks, their ferret eyes, their maudlin, devilish words, their crafty imposition on superstitious, gullible General Macbeth fresh from his rout of the king's enemies—ugh! they make us shudder; come away! Shakespeare, thou art the chief magician, and thy revels are never ended.

The contagious quality for Shakespeare is mastery. I do not think we can mistake him here. He wants characters to be princes in what they do, demands imperiously that each be masterful. Competency, control, and sufficiency are his trinity of character virtues. He enjoys, as Phidias might, the frame and muscles of Hercules and the beauty-dower of lovely Venus, each adequate and satisfactory. Characters must be at one with themselves; nothing must be out of joint. Be they bad as King Claudius, or foolish, mooning, and simpering as Malvolio, or friend like Friar Laurence, or coarse like the old nurse to Juliet, or vociferously churlish as Apemantus, or envious as Cassius, or idealizing and duped as

## SHAKESPEARE'S MEN

Brutus, or sycophant like Oswald, or king's tool like Rosencrantz, or politic as Polonius, or scheming and wicked as Cymbeline's queen, or fond like Bianca, or sultry in passion like Cleopatra, or vile like Boult, or chaste like Marina, or just like Duke Vincento, or rebellious as Caliban, or headstrong and rash as Harry Hotspur, or crushed into the sheer poesy of sorrow like Richard II, or consequential as Dogberry, or fool as Quince, or fantastical like Don Armado, or melancholy as Jaques, or witty as Touchstone, or poetic like Lorenzo, or patriotic as Faulconbridge, or shrewd like Petruchio, or unlovely like Bertram, or insanely jealous like king Leontes—each is coherent. No one falsifies himself, no one is obscure. Each stands a chief personality in the delineation. Shakespeare demands of each that he be himself, full-grown. The idiotic magistrate as Dogberry must be full idiot, the swashbuckler as Sir Toby must be roystering as a carnival knight. Shakespeare will have all his men and women lifesize. Is not his unrevealed motto—and we can fairly hear him now command as in a general's imperious tone—"Show what you are," from which there is no appeal.

In a crude way the following groups may include Shakespeare's men: The fool, the child, the statesman, the politician, the soldier, the aristocrat, Falstaff, the pessimist, the optimist, men of the baser sort, the men of pathos, the men of honor, the friend, the lover, the man

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

of duty, the men in whom conscience, after one fashion or another, operates. Under the caption of "fools" are to be included the clown in Twelfth Night, Touchstone, Malvolio, Quince, Bottom, Dogberry, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, Launce, Justice Shallow, and Justice Silence, with the fool in Lear and Hamlet as jester. Now, the calling these names shows two classes of fools, namely, the intentional and the unintentional, or the fool from plenty of sense, and the fool from paucity of sense. Nobody is so humorous and ludicrous as the person who never sees himself humorous nor feels himself ridiculous. He is solemn as a ghost, he never goes, as the pitcher's balls are sometimes said to, in curves, but in straight lines and, like the leading carriage in a funeral procession, turns street corners at abrupt angles. We feel as if we were chummy with a hearse when he is near. He eschews jest as an irrelevancy, and espouses seriousness as a profession. He is funnier than jokes, and never suspects it, nor could be persuaded. Some are humorous because they do not know to be sensible—as a youth enamored of himself with pompous egotism wedging himself into all occasions, with stilted speech and foppish manners and excess of style in make-up, with monocle and jejune mustache and bull terrier following as if himself cast a shadow, rouses all our risibilities, gives us fits of laughter from which we fear we may not recover, while he remains sober

## SHAKESPEARE'S MEN

as a photograph, never doubting that he excites wonder akin to awe. With this unintentionally jocose soul belong Quince and Bottom and Dogberry and Sir Toby and Sir Andrew and Malvolio and Justice Shallow and Justice Silence. The other class of fools is never fool but always brainy, alert as an Indian on guard in war time, keen as a razor-edged sword. Such fools make laughter, as a skilled artificer. They use us, we cannot use them. They are edged tools, with which to meddle is probably to lose some blood. Call him by what name we will—wit, humorist, laughter-monger, merrymaker, the cause or the excuse of laughter—he is still our superior and in part our enemy. In him is an intellectual ascendancy and a meaning, we know not quite what. The one class was fool from scarcity, the other from excess of brains. In this latter class belong the clown in “Twelfth Night,” King Lear’s fool, Hamlet in his saturnine humors, and, as I think, Touchstone.

Singularly enough, among Shakespeare’s, women are no fools, nor, on the contrary, are there any humorists, unless Beatrice, in “Much Ado About Nothing,” be a single exception. Beatrice and Benedick are constantly crossing swords in repartee, but, for myself, I confess to seeing her only an excess of what I may term feminine priggishness. She does not, as appears to me, so much say cute things, merry things, as pert things, tart things. Instead of a fund of good

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

humor with its fine bead on the liquor of her words and laughter, there is, rather, in her soul an unconscious discontent looking for vent. What she has not, namely, a lover, she affects to despise —a trick some women have not forgotten to this hour. I may be wrong, for these are so largely matters of opinion for which no solid reason can be given, but I am not entertained nor yet stung to laughter by her jest. She impresses me as ill-supplied with good nature, though entirely unconscious that she is so, and is studied in her rejoinders, as one who plays a part without the art to hide that she is conscious. She had the repute of being witty, and felt she must live up to her reputation at whatever hazard, but when in love, she has found her heart and ceases to rail, and her sarcasm sleeps, being possessor of a happy heart. Beatrice is not, therefore, an exception to the rule of Shakespeare's presentation of women without humor. Benedick's words have by far the finer flavor; they are always in admirable temper, and he is parrying, not making, thrusts, is spontaneous as laughter, and full of good humor as Democritus.

The child is Arthur in "King John," and we love him and cannot help it. Shakespeare's children were girls, and possibly in his secret heart was a man's longing for a son, a "lyttel tyke" to follow him along the Avon lanes and through the bustle of the London streets. Cer-

## SHAKESPEARE'S MEN

tain we are that upon the child Arthur he has poured a very sky of tenderness. Arthur with his child's treble, his winsome ways and words, his art to worm his way into our heart and we not know it, his soft and tearful and unsophisticated childish pleading, his persuasiveness, his cogency of argument, because he is a child and gifted a pleader by the God of little children —these are portrayed with such economy of words and lavishness of idea and suggestion as are indigenous to Shakespeare. Small wonder, therefore, if the child by the tears in his voice and the dear pleading of his arms about Hubert's neck puts out the glow upon the iron and makes it passionless as earth. That Shakespeare loved little children, and that his eyes caressed them as they passed him on the street or lane, no reader of "King John" can ever question.

The statesman is Cardinal Wolsey. Cæsar, though the chief statesman of the Roman race, is not pictured as statesman in Shakespeare's play. Wolsey is alone, lacking in the politic, stalwart in his power and genius, the dominator of kings, haughty, imperious, opulent, sagacious, ambitious, and yet a creature to be put down or up at a gross king's whim, and in his fall more the prince than in his pomp of premiership.

The politicians are Henry Bolingbroke, Marc Antony in his harangue at Cæsar's funeral, and Polonius. The character of Bolingbroke is luminously sketched. Bowing low from his prancing

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

steed, saying, "Your servant, countrymen," selfish, peevish, courting favor assiduously as any lover, veneered, being all things to all men if by all means he might fool some—that was Bolingbroke. Polonius is the shrewd soul, not quite statesman but full-grown politician, skilled in diplomacy, a magazine of precedents, lacking the creative faculty and instinct, whose business is politics rather than policies, crafty but not astute, never doubting himself is penetrating all others, never guessing he is looked through like glass, intent on subserviency to his chief, and when he hides in the queen's boudoir to ravish Hamlet of his secret, is slain by the quick, chance-thrust of Hamlet's suspicious and angry sword. So ends this politician.

The soldier is Henry V, rather than Antony or Faulconbridge, though Faulconbridge rather than Antony, and Edmund rather than either. Military prowess and accomplishment are in Edmund. He is a-glitter like a knight in battle harness, and is possessed of fire, audacity, ability to mass men and hurl them on to victory and lead them back with spoils and banners and captives, but is lost in the movement of the tragedy of which he is so bad and great a part. Henry is the truer soldier portrait. No defeat clouds his campaigns; his trophies are crowns and wife and kingdoms. Henry thinks himself a soldier, and as a soldier woos. The soldier at home in the infernal din of battle,

## SHAKESPEARE'S MEN

groans, and charge, and wild huzza, is what Shakespeare has made Henry to appear.

Falstaff is a class by himself. He has no brothers. No hint can do him justice. His case must be argued at length, like a pending treaty. He is king of laughter, so that when he jests the whole world must keep silent. He is the American humorist, before America gave a jester birth. As himself saw, he was cause of humor in others, provoking brilliancy from very clods, the versatile, ten-thousand-sided man whose huge bulk "lards the lean earth as he walks along" and whose amazing wit plays on all about him as if they were pipes whose every stop he knew and was full master of. Huge in boast and impudence and laughters and bestialities and persuasions with men and women, say now for this arch-jester only this—Nobody has ever come in bowshot of his humor. Even yet the world's sides ache with laughter at his jests and him.

The pessimists are Gloucester, in "King Lear," and Shylock and Timon and Apemantus and Cassius, hater of Caesar, and Jaques, in "As You Like It." Practically all shades of pessimist mood are presented in these persons. Jaques is incipient pessimist, being melancholy and suspicious and dreamy in his views of things; he sees, or thinks he sees, the shadows chasing sunlight from the hills. If he change not nor die, he will by and by be misanthrope. Gloucester

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

is in nothing amiable. A coarse man, speaking lewdly of the mother of his son, steered by no governing motive and strong, he becomes attempted suicide in his calamities. Apemantus raves to hear himself; Timon curses because he does not hear himself. He had been lavish and foolish; now he is splenetic, turbulent, unreasoning, revengeful, and misanthropist. Both moods are insane. Shylock hates them that despise him, and his heart so pants for vengeance as that his hand plays with the knife for utter love of it. He had occasion for his anger, but vengeance is best left to God; and vengeance is pessimism grown to fruit. Cassius is cold as ice, bitter as winter, and using every man in range of him as hand and knife to stab his enemy, whom he hates for the good reason that this Cæsar has won applause and popularity and glory and Cassius plays a lesser part. Cassius is egotism that exalts itself to heaven in estimation, and is selfishness in full and poisonous flower. In this company legitimately fall the suicides, who are Romeo, Cassius, Brutus, and Othello. Romeo had with his equatorial nature loved to distraction, had wedded, and now, standing at the tomb of his beloved Juliet, finds the day pitch-dark about him. His broken heart says the day is dead with Juliet—there can be no more light—and that is the full mood of pessimism. Lost hope is a life in ruins. Hope must not die. Duty, Romeo had not seen, for he

## SHAKESPEARE'S MEN

was one to whom that word had made no loud appeal, and such a man is blighted while in gorgeous bloom; so it happens his impulse controls him and goads him to drink the poisoned cup. Cassius—stoic and pessimist, his plans defeated, his ambition slain but not dead, his envy in nothing abated—thinks death a lesser evil than to meet his conqueror. In pessimism is little real courage. To live under adverse stars is odds harder than to die. Suicide is rank moral cowardice. Brutus, carried away with his enthusiasm for liberty, finds himself the dupe of Cassius, who has used him as his dagger to work his envy's spite, finds Cæsar, truly “dead as earth” but the republic as dead as Cæsar, finds Antony his conqueror, and, what is worse, far worse, finds his dreams all dead; and his eyes are dim, he can see no whither save only the road for his dagger to his heart. Othello had lost faith, then Desdemona, then had found himself poor dupe of cunning Iago, and leaps toward his suicide as swimmer toward the flood. When God has died to any soul, suicide is the quick way out of life's tragedy.

Shakespeare's optimists are really one, and he, Prospero. Faulconbridge might pass for company, if one would stretch a point, but he was rather loyal, unquestioning soldier-follower than schooled optimist. What Hamlet missed of being by his scowling attitude, that Prospero was. Robbed of his kingdom, he had his daughter

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

and his books, and therein found a kingdom spacious as the skies. He had outlived hate, was calm, and so a calmer of the angry waters; scientist, and knew the art to make Caliban and Ariel do his bidding; schooled to endure adversity with a smiling face and beat back ruin with a laughing heart; self-poised, mage, master of himself and so of others; a man who refused to be conquered or handicapped by fate, but with his undaunted courage and his books found recovery and kingdom.

Shakespeare's aristocrat is Coriolanus, and is aristocrat life-sized. He is a glowing portrait. His stout words of hate against the canaille are still hot in the air. Coriolanus was a soldier, a hero scarred with many battles for the State, and he hates the crowd nor loves their cheers, nor feels their curses. He is a graphic working-out of this attitude toward society, the attitude that calls folks cads and lavishes fulsome love upon itself. Never was aristocrat so clearly seen, so aptly delineated. Into this character, I take it, Shakespeare poured the acidity himself had seen in aristocracies. Doubtless he had felt the lash of that inferiority that boasts itself in blood, and a great name not made but inherited. He is very caustic in that he lets the littleness and bigotry of Coriolanus blaze out so as to obscure his valor and exploits and hurl him headlong to treason. Aristocratic pride is cheap and little. Worth is God's merit-mark. Coriolanus

## SHAKESPEARE'S MEN

should have known that worth makes the man—himself or another—and that aristocracies and democracies both have their weaknesses and wickedness, and as between the two the common man is the conserver of the safety of the world. He was hysterical and self-conscious as a foolish girl.

The men of the baser sort are Cloten, Pandarus, Claudio, Angelo, Iachimo, King John, Richard III, Claudius, Oswald, Edmund the bastard, and Iago—not to mention those moral scullions, Bardolph, Nym, Pistol, and their ilk. Macbeth shall be mentioned in another company, though he belongs here too. Bad men belong in many classes. Iago was pessimist, and might have found classification there, but that his more legitimate ranking was with the basest of the base. Cassius belongs here; but, among pessimists, he felt so altogether at home, I thought to make him cheerful after his gloomy fashion, and so placed him there. Cymbeline was perilously near being a base man because weakness, culpable weakness, differentiates itself with difficulty from badness and baseness. A word to these brothers in wickedness. Cloten, son of Cymbeline's queen, is first coarse, then ambitious in what requires no manliness nor manly effort, then criminally weak, then base and brutal. Pandarus is paid go-between of lust and love, and has come to such shamed eminence as that his name is written in the world's lexicon as "pander"—a minister to lust. Claudio is

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

brother to the chaste, immaculate Isabella; and when his sister's virtue is assailed by Angelo, the duke's deputy, and this foul ruler makes the sister's virtue the price of the brother's freedom and life, Claudio, fearing death, asks Isabella to prostitute herself that he may live. Few conceptions in Shakespeare are more fiercely and mightily wrought out than this, and Claudio is damned to all the ages. Angelo is ruler who makes rigid laws against vice, and himself holds not back from lust, and will stop at no violence to compass his will, and is so base as that no pleading from chaste lips nor tears from chaste eyes nor eloquence of purity and heartbreak can move him; and he is dead and his name rots. Iachimo is in some regards, to my fancy, the vilest man in Shakespeare, in that he, without a shade of reason, does the foulest thing possible to a man, namely, blemishes a spotless woman's name, and that with her husband. A wager did it. Wagers are vicious and vice-producing. Iachimo affects to have access to Imogen's room and person, describes her boudoir and her breast so that silly and mean Leonatus—for in this he was less than man that he would put his wife's virtue to a wager, but so still does gambling hold nothing sacred—is deceived, and Iachimo lets him stay deceived and rest in the belief his wife is lewd. Can any man be viler than Iachimo? King John is the impotent meanness and rage of a small mind set in high places.

## SHAKESPEARE'S MEN

Richard III—as Shakespeare fashions him, I do not now raise the question of the historical accuracy of the portrait—is a powerful and wicked mind turning all its resources of statecraft, cunning, courage, and imperial will toward the single task of self-aggrandizement. King Claudius is a man weak in all but wickedness. Oswald is sycophant and pusillanimous. Edmund is a man of military carriage, fascinating to women, dissatisfied, ambitious, villainous, heartless when his own interests are jeopardized by kindness, a self-sympathizer, a murderer of a brother's good name so that he may become his father's favorite and heir, giver-over of his father to the charge of treason so that he may seize his estates and this with a courtly semblance of virtue which might make Iago envious; and, dying, spitting out with his life's blood.

“Some good I mean to do,  
Despite of mine own nature,”

and with his selfishness still regnant in him, seeing by report that Goneril and Regan are dead, and for love of him,

“Yet Edmund was beloved:  
The one the other poisoned for my sake,  
And after slew herself.”

Iago is patron saint of villains and hypocrites. Words are lost on him. His guilt is black as Erebus. He is so deep a hypocrite as to de-

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

ceive himself, which is the last infamy of hypocrisy and becomes its suicide. Only Guido, in Browning's powerful drama, is worse than Iago. So stands he in a foul preeminence.

The men of pathos are such as Wolsey—for whom no words now—and Lear and Richard II and Henry VI; and they three are kings! Is this design of Shakespeare to make his men of tears all sovereigns? Can kings weep and come to ashes as their sweetest morsel? So say these kings with broken voices and humbled looks, that used to be so high. Richard moaning,

“I am sworn, brother, sweet,  
To grim Necessity, and he and I  
Will keep a league till death.

And must I ravel out  
My weaved-up folly?

Mine eyes are full of tears, I cannot see,”

is very pitiful. And Henry is full brother in this grief. As Henry's father's father had uncrowned Richard, so now he is uncrowned, and Richard and Henry across the years reach trembling and unsceptered hands and say with tear-choked voice, “Brothers we, kinsmen in grief.” And Lear—with his eighty years and past of snowfall on him and his dear, misprized Cordelia in his arms and he with voice metal-hard, rasping, “Cordelia, stay a little,” and then sobbing, with a drooping voice,

## SHAKESPEARE'S MEN

“She's dead as earth,  
Now she's gone forever!  
Cordelia, Cordelia! stay a little.  
Thou'l come no more,  
Never, never, never, never!—”

well may Edgar say—no words of ours—“Very bootless.”

Hamlet and Othello and Valentine are Shakespeare's men of honor. Hamlet was eager to be honor's self, but knew not how. Othello is not the tragedy of jealousy, as many think, but is the tragedy of wounded honor. He was a soldier, and soldiers hold honor above all beside. Othello loved with a wild, true heart, it is true, but behind this is his sense of being shamed in Desdemona, and his hot haste of honor slew him and her. He presents the fatuity of honor. His soldier mind upsets his husband sense and fidelity of love. Valentine's is honor's noble and spotless self.

Some sweet friends are shaped in Shakespeare; and no wonder, if he who wrote the Sonnets for love of friend should from his heart's deep loves make friendship beautiful upon the stage. Enobarbus in “Antony and Cleopatra,” friend to Antony; Menenius, friend to hot-blooded Coriolanus; Pisanio at once servant and fast, true friend of Posthumus Leonatus and Imogen; Marc Antony, Cæsar's friend and eulogist—and for

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

such a eulogium from such a friend who might not endure to die?—and Horatio. And Horatio? Who that loves loves him not?

Horatio? Hamlet trusted him as I fear me he did not trust God, and left him legacy:

“Absent thee from felicity awhile  
To tell my story.

. . . . .  
Had I but time—as this fell sergeant, death,  
Is strict in his arrest—O I could tell you—  
But let be. Horatio, I am dead;  
Thou livest; report me and my cause aright  
To the unsatisfied.”

“The rest is silence,” and his last look lingers on Horatio’s face, and with a voice stained with tears Horatio whispers, “Now cracks a noble heart; good night, sweet prince.”

The lovers are Duke Orsino, seeming fickle but surely true; Orlando, lover of Rosalind, and a more welcome and comely lover woman never would wish to love; Valentine, spotless gentleman from Verona, whose love was like himself true as the stars and white like their light; Romeo, a tempest of bewildered passion; Marc Antony, mad with love, checkmated by his heart, slave of that haunting voluptuousness named Cleopatra, fond enough to lose an empire and think nothing lost, and feeling his wounded way to Cleopatra’s tower to die upon her heart and with her kisses on his lips; Posthumus Leonatus, true in love to lovely Imogen, but weak in trust

## SHAKESPEARE'S MEN

of her; King Leontes, ridiculous in his distrust of stately Hermione; Othello, who loved Desdemona with all the fervor of his tropic race; Lorenzo with his poet speech—these are royal lovers, and glow like crimson skies that will not fade.

Hamlet is the man of duty, and essentially he is the one man who is so presented, unless we except Kent, in Lear, who to my thought is rather the faithfulness of the courtier than the worker out of sober duty. But Hamlet is trying to find out what his duty is and do it. Until the last he did not find it out, and did do it; but the man's futile endeavors, his colloquies with ghost and king and queen and himself to find where duty lay are sufficient to wake my pity and my tears. He haunts me as his father's ghost does not. His was a solitary search for duty, and only in his dying throes did he behold his opportunity for which his life had waited. Pity Hamlet for his endeavor's sake.

In strident tones, like wind on winter seas, driving through rigging of a ship scudding before the gale, conscience speaks in Richard III and in Macbeth. When Richard sleeps, conscience menaces him like lightning swords; when Macbeth wakes, conscience turns the intrepid soldier into a quaking voice and fear-whitened face and ghastly look at the empty but bloody chair of Banquo, and he calls so that the dinner feast is quite undone, calls with pallor in his very words,

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

“You cannot say I did it:  
Shake not your gory locks at me.”

In Lady Macbeth and King Macbeth conscience rises to its noon.

Shakespeare's men cannot be summoned and arrayed as in a line of march, but they are mighty, and their name is legion, and they grow on the imagination like the height of midnight skies.

## II

### THE LITERATURE OF NATURE

God must be glad in seeing how the citizens of his earth are coming, though only inch by inch, to the enjoyment of his earth and theirs. Nobody told man the world was lovely; he was left to find that out for himself—a thing, as the event shows, he was slow to do. Love of nature has been the tardiest of century plants to come to flower.

Sixty centuries is a long while for anybody but God to wait, and he has waited—and not in vain. We begin to see. Daydawn is on the soul. The first thing made was the out-of-doors, and this was the last thing seen. We are not precocious. We are like children who rub their eyes open when they wake.

God's love for nature is something stronger than any fiction. He loves it for its own sake; he walks in his garden because it is fair, not because it is useful. You will never explain the wonder of creation by appeal to utility. Utility there is in plenty, but never as a last word. Coal banks are here, and so are violet banks; and as between the two we may not hesitate to name the one God lingers the longer beside.

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

Apple blooms are more to his liking than apple fruit. He makes the blossom precursor of the fruit not as a necessity, but as a courtesy; and the radiancy of apple blossoms and their perfume haunt the air and memory with such witchery as belongs not to the edible fruit. Between winter and fall comes the blossom, a sheer gratuity of God.

Birds' nests could have been as crude as where the mourning dove lays its two white eggs; but the oriole's cradle, for winds to rock, is woven with such surpassing skill as makes the nest an adornment for a studio wall, and the vireo builds of dainty grasses a house so dainty that one who has once seen this homestead of the birds always wants to see it again. Beauty for its own sake is a cardinal principle with God. Providence is as fond of adornment as any woman. Prairies and orchards are garbed in flowers; the stars are unlike worlds, but quite like jewels; the skies are not like atmosphere fit for good breathing but like one huge sapphire hollowed to a dome; and the sea is not a bridge for ships, but a wild plain, bloomed out, at certain moods of light, in *lapis lazuli*. Emeralds are rare and costly, but not any emerald ever flashed green lights, sudden and strange, as beautiful as leaves of trees or green of wild grasses. Beauty has been universalized. Men, set into this beauty as a mountain into a plain, were as if the mountain knew not that the plain was there; in such a world, but not of it.

## THE LITERATURE OF NATURE

Literature is a record of what hearts have seen, never anything else. What books have said is what men have seen. Literature is a use of eyes, sometimes turned on men, sometimes on manners, sometimes on hearts, sometimes on ranges of gigantic hills or furrowed wastes of malcontent seas; but evermore in letters we are dealing with eyes. "The things we have seen declare we unto you," is the legend writ on the title page of every volume the world has hazarded to write, so that at some time or other everything will come in for its share of attention. When we see a thing we shall talk of it. Men's slow eyes are blamable for men's slow tongues. Democracy in letters was a tardy appearance solely because our human eyes were so unpardonably slow in seeing that man's value lay in that he was man: any man was tall enough to touch the skies. This once seen, literature has suffered an invasion. Dialect speech from the lips of Burns or Cable or Dickens or Riley—what matters from whose lips?—that speech is the answer to the ordinary man among us, "I am here."

Men did not see nature and, of course, did not talk about it. This is reason for entire national literatures being almost exempt from any word about the world whose only roofing is the sky and whose only hedgerow is the sky line. The notion that to be a barbarian is to be close to nature is one of those sentimental follies we have at the hands of Rousseau, who, with cap-

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

tivating egotism, thought things were true not because they were facts, but because he thought them. Barbarians did not see nature. They had a lewd freedom far from economy or comfort. They dwelt out of doors as the tramp does, not for love of its odors and freedom, but for lack of energy to build a shelter.

To be *in* things does not argue that such things become a constituent of our frame. We have no justifying reason for saying that the early world that lived out of doors saw the outdoors. To march bareheaded is not to get close to nature. To chip flint into arrow points is not to become collector of flesh-colored flints. The arrow-maker never saw the color of the stone he contrived. He hewed to get a point to stab a bird or antelope to death. Let us have done with this untruthful talk of how the savage loved his savage world. He never saw the stars save to guide his march, nor the moss on the north side of the tree trunks except to help his goings when the stars were hid.

And what was true of the savage was in large measure true of the older civilizations of mankind. The Roman was no nature lover. The Greek was no nature lover. He worshiped symmetry, physical beauty, whether in temple column, beast body, or the naked strength of man. He loved such things as marched in the pan-Athenaic procession. But a flower for its own sake—that was not a Greek. Any truthful

## THE LITERATURE OF NATURE

work about the Greek will assert this, but such word is not always procurable. We have a fateful way of reading into such races or persons as we love such characteristics as we think they should have had. It is the world-old lover fashion. The culturist can hardly persuade himself to tell plain truth about the Greek mind and genius. Maybe he does not know it. Infatuees are admirable panegyrists, but sorry historians.

That a shepherd boy may have about him the freedom of his hills and the Greek a full-chested power of breathing sea air and shore air is doubtless true, but that the air was a conscious delight to him we are not, in my opinion, qualified to remark. Greek literature is a literature of humanity. Man interests Homer and Plato. With some sudden crush of spears dispeople the “*Iliad*” of battles and warriors, and your plain between Simois and Scamander will be strewn with empty tents. Now and then Homer will drop a word about the “wine-colored deep,” but an anthology of his references to nature would be a mere booklet; and when, in a passage become famous centuries ago, reference is made to the stars, it is as a flash-light on the tents and hosts of Agamemnon.

In the “*Odyssey*,” so often called the epic of the sea, the sea is simple angry background for Ulysses; in other words, the sea is present as a matter of course, and not as in itself a glory un-

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

speakable. It was scorpion lash to Ulysses, that was all. The sea and a man pitted against each other to show how big the man was—that is the sea's province in the "Odyssey." To come to the ocean with the drunken delight of Conrad is beyond the Greek. In other words, we have grown to a vision the classic writers did not possess. This utterance of a visible fact is not belittling them nor exalting ourselves. The much-talked-of pastoral beauty of Theocritus dwindles away when we read what Theocritus wrote instead of reading what devotees of his have said. He wrote engrossed with the shepherd and shepherdess. The sheep were around somewhere, to be sure; else how could lambs gambol and sheep feed? But to anyone coming with open mind to Theocritus to find a real zest in nature, and a radiant pleasure in being out of doors because it is out of doors, Theocritus will prove a disappointment.

My belief, or possibly it were wiser to say my feeling, is that the "Philoctetes" of Sophocles is possessed of more nature love than any other work of Greek literature. I feel the open plain and sky and sea more in him. The Greek idyl and the pastoral were more in name than in fact, and were always more concerned with man than nature. They are of value principally as indicating a dissent in favor (theoretical, mainly) of comparative solitude. Thus much the Greek idyl suggested. A landscape without a human

## THE LITERATURE OF NATURE

figure in it, like Van Elten's "In the Meadow," or one of Weber's sunsets, is a pastoral effect for which the Greek temper had no affinity.

The pastoral idea had more complete access to the Hebrew mind than to any other of antiquity. The Bible in its entirety has more outdoors in it than all Greek and Latin literature combined. If this statement appear at first sight an exaggeration, an appeal to the books will suffice to disclose its sober truthfulness. Roman Horace, with his villa in the Sabine hills, cannot compare in rustic spirit with any one of the Hebrew prophets or poets. They were not playing lovers of nature; they were working at it. The shepherd of Tekoa had nothing of Horace's lack of seriousness about him. The desert was in his blood and breath. I once made an anthology of the Bible references to the sea, and, for adequacy, I would not hesitate to declare them most satisfactory of all that has been said to date—not forgetting Wordsworth's "The trampling waves" and Blackmore's "The great unvintaged ocean," or Tennyson's "Stormy crests that smote against the skies." Lovers of nature cannot do better than give a loving reading to the Holy Scriptures. Bleak mountain, wide plain, houseless night, hosts of stars, wicked sea, fading flowers, the withering vine, shorn meadows, stately palm, spreading cedar, brawny oak, opening rose, flaunting lily, dry waterbrook, rushing stream, still Galilee,

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

longed-for dawn, sky red with sunset, wash of sea wave, sag of tempestuous water, perfume from the wheat fields—all these are here and landscapes besides.

The Epistle of James, that has been thought, and is, a harsh book, has more nature sensing than Theocritus—a hard saying, but a true. And Solomon's Song is the loveliest idyl ever penned. You feel the dewy night; you scent the blossoming grapes; you catch the flash-light of the gentle stars; the northern hills rise through the fog banks of the night; flowers exhale perfume; and palace and king are forgotten utterly in the quiet and comfort of that country where, “far from enemies,” love loves and sings and sighs for its beloved. Ruth is the country brought to your heart. We walk barefoot along the stubble field and hear the ringing of the sickle and the laughter of harvesters, and the hot smell of the sunny wheat fills the nostrils.

Nor need mention be made of this: that He who made the field and sowed it to wild flowers was so awake to things out of doors that his words were of them ere he was aware and he spake of them “as never man spake.” The Bible is not less the book of outdoors because it is the book of the hid places of the soul. The Pleiades are there and the brown desert smoking to the feet of running beasts or echoing to the lion’s roar.

Here for ages the matter rested. The oaten pipe was forgotten. The world was citified.

## THE LITERATURE OF NATURE

Army and palace occupy every tent along the field of letters. The country was a place to grow crops and to ride through. "London" might be written of by Dr. Johnson. That was poetry. Poets stayed in town. They found nothing much to see out of town. So poetry died; for poetry is not city-bred. The poetasters wrote about nilities and inanities, imitating classic models save in that the classic writers said something; their imitators generally made a good out at not saying much of anything. Euphues swaggered with his silly lisp and constant leer. Everything was storemade. Homemade things were disdained.

Then Goldsmith came and held his flute tight, in bumpkin style, and played desultory airs, and men forgot the city and the court and went a-gypsying with him. He helped the world to get out of town. And Burns came, with the dirt of plowing on his shoes and a plowed-up daisy in his dirty hand and a song of the uprooted flower on his lips, and men stayed them and listened and thought they heard the larks at song. All Burns has said worth listening to was country-said; when he tries to be "citified" we laugh at him and canna help it, but when he walks among "The rigs of barley" of "On Cessnock banks," or talks of "A winter night" or hoots at the owl, or mutters big words against such as destroy the woods near Drumlangrig, or has his word with "Ye hills! near neibors o'

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

the starns," or barks at "The twa dogs," or wags his pow about "The brigs of Ayr," then he is poet spelled in capitals. His was the resort to nature because he knew nothing else. His shoes are hobnailed, and his voice has the guffaw of the countryside; but when he sings or talks the world will "mind it" of the blooming daisy and the flowing Afton and will call to him to wait a minute till it may lay its work aside and go with him adoun the glen where the cushat calls and the waters romp like twa dogs at play.

And Wordsworth shut the house door, and latched it, and went to live beneath stars and daylight, unafraid. We shall not, because we cannot, exaggerate Wordsworth's worth. He walked, wondered, mused, dreamed sensitive dreams, had far excursions, took the world with him by the hand as he went, sauntered, walked rather than rode—as knowing how things to be seen where God grew them must be seen afoot; entertained no flattering opinion of Peter Bell, for

A primrose by a river's brim  
A yellow primrose was to him,  
And it was nothing more;

knew "There was a boy," and

Many a time  
At evening, when the earliest stars began  
To move along the edges of the hills,  
Rising or setting, would he stand alone  
Beneath the trees or by the glimmering lake,  
And there with fingers interwoven, both hands

## THE LITERATURE OF NATURE

Pressed closely palm to palm and to his mouth  
Uplifted, he as through an instrument  
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls  
That they might answer him. And they would shout  
Across the watery vale, and shout again,  
Responsive to his call, with quivering peals,  
And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud  
Redoubled and redoubled.

He loved the night, sat beneath the yew tree as if he sat in a king's presence, heard the skylark with ecstasy, wrote love lyrics to the daisy, heard and loved the redbreast, was pricked by the thorn into singing, visited and revisited Yarrow, wrote a sonnet series to the river Duddon as other poets had written to their mistresses, made madrigals to the sea and to the moon and the seashore, kissed with poet lips the small celandine. His grave is as it should be—out of doors, under the skies, by Windemere. Wordsworth, we cannot overlaud who were helped by him to love the things he so truly loved.

To omit Thomson from these instaurators of nature-love might savor of ingratitude; therefore this word: We are his debtors because he wrote "The Seasons" and so turned face from the street to the field. To think on the outdoors was a service of unusual order, and to affect that such might be high enough theme for poetry was super-service. This is totality of Thomson's contribution, as I think. Reading his "Seasons," one is impressed how little there was in them of nature. Thomson's models of pastorals plainly

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

were the classic idyls of which a former remark gives the essence; "The Seasons" are talks about people rather than seasons and things; but we will not underrate his value who had temerity and insight enough to return to the hills, whence cometh help. To set people out of town into the shadows of the woods, "far from the madding crowd," was enough to give this poet immortality. Only as he helped a renaissance is Thomson a man of caliber.

The nature folk named so far have been poets not through this writer's fault. Poets run ahead of nearly every procession leading uphill into the wide open, reaching out to God. Now is time to name a prose writer who, using prose as vehicle for his expression, was to all wise intents not writer of prose, but poet. His name is Ruskin. Save in his essays on political economy he never wrote save in poetry. He had the poet's eyes. How happy a possession! He had the poet's touch. How full of suggestion and thrill! He had the poet's voice, tense with music and lyric in its tone. And Ruskin was an outdoors man. He did more in his generation to make the clouds and the mountains and streams and seas visible than any other, and possibly than all others. He became a fad, though few fads pay. This was of positive service. It was thought "the thing" to read Ruskin; and so, through this unworthy mood even, his beauties became the more prevalent. Women

## THE LITERATURE OF NATURE

and men read him and began to wink in the sun's face. Mountains began looming from the mists. Alps became accessible. Nature became less a name and more a force. This was Ruskin's contribution to literature and life, which was incalculable. We cannot love him enough therefor. We began to see. Nature became the expression of an idea.

Some things Ruskin did not notice. Prairies were not attractive to him; because, maybe, he had never seen veritable prairies. They belong to America. But what himself calls Turner's "pathetic interest in the sea" we may change to Ruskin's. Running water, whether in river or ocean, set Ruskin's eye "in a fine frenzy rolling." We can never look on water in motion since Ruskin's day without having him in heart. That etcher's study of the lines of a swollen flood how jubilant it makes the heart and how mountain shapes bulk on our thought through him! How severe and grand and heaven-born they are seen to be! And the tree-shapes, with their nature curves remote from conventionality, we are become cognizant of through him. This is a case of double borrowing, reminding us of our debt to Plato-Socrates. Ruskin told us; but Turner saw, and he told Ruskin. Ruskin was Turner's Plato, rehearsing his thoughts. So of the clouds. Did anybody ever see clouds till Turner came? God waited so very long for him. I very often gloat over two

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

old volumes in my library. I love them much. They can only leave these shelves by theft. They cannot be given away or sold. The thief is the one gentleman who can lay violent hands on them. They are Rogers's "Poems," and "Italy," illustrated by Turner. Peace to friend Rogers! If I love him less, I love his illustrator more. This is the original imprint. What clouds! They transport me what time I look at them—be it day or dark, winter or spring—those wondrous mists from which he has squeezed not rain, but poetry. Bless you, Turner, forever! And bless you, Ruskin, likewise forever, that you knew enough to see when things were pointed out to you! The rest of us were less wise, but you have helped us. You drubbed us and were shrewish betimes, but your provocation was great. We do not fault you. We love you. We have learned to see in part. "Now we see in part," but then—!

These writers named have inaugurated the nature literature. They bring us to to-day. And it is common knowledge how in the last ten years more heed has been given to nature things than in all the ages of this world put together. How good it is to hear those words! We are learning to see. Book writers are telling us because we want to know. Think of the spring freshet of nature books on birds, beasties, ferns, butterflies, trees, mushrooms, hunting, loitering, fishing, sea-gazing, sea rapture, roving, climbing inaccessible peaks, challenging the ice

## THE LITERATURE OF NATURE

gorge of Alp and Himalaya. We are out of doors. Nobody can deny it. Book stores have shelf or case yclept "Nature Books." The sign is woodsy. We have a pouring rain of nature literature; but let us be wet to the skin by it. So shall we be blest. Study books, purely informational, are such as Britton and Brown's "Illustrated Flora of the Northern States and Canada," Neltje Blanchan's "Bird Neighbors and Garden" and "Birds that Hunt and Are Hunted;" Dugmore's "Bird Homes," Going's "With the Wild Flowers," Huntington's "Studies of Trees in Winter," Clute's "Our Ferns in Their Haunts," Allen's "Flashlights on Nature," Holland's "The Butterfly Book." These are, each in its way, knowing and knowledge-giving for such as are nosing about trying to find out things about the world-house and its inhabitants. These are rather textbooks than books, but they are worth having around and are necessary.

Then come books about nature's doings, sayings, and folk of varying sorts. Torrey's "Footing It in Franconia" and others of the same temper are bird notes all but entirely. John Burroughs's books—read them all save when he wanders over to Walt Whitman; then be excused. But Burroughs is probably the most dainty and natural of the veritable nature writers, has the love of outdoors soaking him as balsam pines soak the air, has the alert eye and ear, cares for things in the wild. He has caught nature's

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

gait and swings along the wood path like a good woodsman. He is superior to all English writers. Grant Allen would be good but that his mania for evolution runs wild. He is funnier than the end man in the minstrels in his accrediting to a sea wort more sense than the average man is owner of. His hobby rides him to death. This subtracts from the worth of an otherwise valuable book, "Colin Clout's Calendar." To use the phrase of Hosea Biglow, his theory "noses around arter him" too much. But in "Red Deer and Wood Magic," and especially in "Field and Hedgerow," is English nature-writing at the happiest. Jeffries loved things that grew green and wild, and wondered what they would do for a chronicler when he was gone. Such love is pathetic, but winsome. His "Walks in the Wheatfields" is high-water mark with him and makes us love him. Thoreau is not to be omitted. Strange, unsocial human that he was, his kindred was the wild. The man to whose breast the hunted squirrel ran for safety and to whose shoulder flew the hunted bird cannot be ignored as a woodsman. "The Maine Woods" and "Walden" are best, but read all. He is worth it. "Cape Cod" and "Concord and Merrimac Rivers" are too good to let slip from the hand unread; and the diaries on winter, summer, spring, and autumn, though containing much repetition, may still be read by such as care to track this curious spirit through the fields of his vagabond life. Burroughs is

## THE LITERATURE OF NATURE

probably right in insisting that Thoreau did not see much, was not an acute observer, added little to our actual knowledge; yet is this aside from the mark. We are not asking a man to see so much more than we that he can teach us science; we want him to see enough to show us things. That is farther reaching. This Thoreau did. He lived on the outlands. He was near the earth, where the rootlets of jeweled flowers ramify. He loved solitude rudely startled by the hoarse voice of the north wind blowing wild and the clamor of pines in their fierce contention with tempests. He stayed where things in nature were wrought and his chill blood grew tepid when he watched the listless constellation of Altair light her unflickering lamps. Thoreau is in the literature of nature to stay.

John C. Van Dyke's "Nature for Its Own Sake" has a didactic value. But he has written "The Opal Sea;" and "The Desert" is to me a book of special tang. The haunting quality of the desert and the enigmatical quality of the American desert are here brought into the open blaze of the desert sunlight. Passages in Stewart Edward White's "The Mountains" and "Arizona Nights" bring the desert dust and blaze and parched lips and throat and fling them on you like a burning cloak, though not in such certain fashion as Van Dyke's "The Desert." The description of the Colorado River, especially after it has left the highlands and the canyon gorges, ablaze

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

with splendor, and crushed its way out into the desert, where it crawls at length like a wounded serpent to the sea, appears to me one of the most haunting things in nature writing. Hichens's "The Garden of Allah," however, has distanced all competitors in the possession of the desert "atmosphere." There is no second to this vasty desert space where drift the eternal sands and carve themselves like banks of yellow snow and where all strange fancies rise, and fears, vagaries riot volcanic as fiery desert, desert-wide and passionate. That book is not to be classed among novels, but among nature books.

I could say the same of Stewart Edward White's "The Silent Places." A wise literary friend of mine called my attention to that fiction years ago, for which I bless him. Beyond any book of arctic exploration I have read (and I think I have read them all) this novel catches the sense of the eternal winter. The snow blindness, the eternal stretches of white, white, white, snow, only snow ever over fields where winter owns the universe and the universe is winter, the ruthless, inappeasable winter invaded by a ruthless man, who in turn shall be overtaken by an undaunted man behind whose creaking snowshoes sound always, as an echo, a woman's footfall—a woman's imperishable heart, whose love turns the snowy everlasting winter into a tropic scene—all these are here, aye and here eternally. White's "The Forest" has the love of

## THE LITERATURE OF NATURE

the wilderness in it and the swish of the stream, and does not try to inoculate you with anything in particular but everything in general. He is a good man to camp with; and "The Blazed Trail" has the swaying of the pines in its breath and the romp of the swollen stream in its movement. "The Mountains" is an engaging book, its mighty eagle casting a shifting cloud across the mountain tops.

Joseph Jackson's "Through Glade and Mead" is worth while. Charles C. Abbott, while not particularly illuminating, is out looking around. Foster's "In the Forest" makes of us all hunters of big game, and we stalk the moose as being Indians born. Eden Phillpotts's "My Devon Year" is a book to be had at every hazard.

John Muir, so vital a physical man and so vital a lover of the out-of-doors, especially the magnificent in the out-of-doors (for he cares little for the minutiae of nature), is a man with whom every outdoors body should grow familiar. The Muir Glacier in Alaska is named after him, and the Muir Woods in California are named after him, and a posthumous volume, "Travels in Alaska," and his volume on "Our National Parks" are full of the prowess of the out-of-doors. And his love for the Sierras, and in particular for the Yosemite, and his knowledge of them, make a body's pulse bound like a rushing mountain stream which he so much delighted in.

Wild life has a good exponent in Charles G. D.

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

Roberts, who as a poet is skilled to get the essence of the wild north land and hand it back to us. "The Kindred of the Wild" and "Nature's Enigmas" have this fearless, haunting quality of wilderness which ally them with a book which will be read with avidity—London's "The Call of the Wild." Reading that, burning points stare at you in the darkness, "but always two by two, two by two." I account that weird and wonderful in its effect on the mind. Gilbert Parker's "Pierre and His People" and "An Adventurer of the North" give the atmosphere of that wide land which neighbors with the pole and make you feel its vastness as no other books of my knowledge know to do. They are magical. Thompson-Seton's studies of animal life are fascinating.

Now come nature studies by the way, where in the house or under the trees faces are all the while turned toward the sky and woods. Mabie's "Under the Trees" and Henry van Dyke's delicious "Little Rivers" and "Fisherman's Luck" and Daniel A. Goodsell's "Nature and Character at Granite Bay," a book to be happy over, and Buckham's "Where Town and Country Meet" (it will be a short day when one goes wandering with him), and Emerson—ho! we have leaped into a rapids. Emerson catches our skiff in rapid torrents. Whatever variation of estimate may be prevalent regarding Emerson, we feel sure that he who knows him at all is sure he is a lover of nature. In poetry or prose he walks

## THE LITERATURE OF NATURE

out toward the sky. Spaces fascinate his spirit. He loves stars. The sun is so much to him he might readily become Parsee. Nature is always encroaching on him. He feels when he does not see. I can forgive a score of vagaries and contradictions when I find him always turning toward sunsets and the rising moon and the ponderance of the dewdrop and the wonder of gravitations. His essays on poet or beauty or nature or what not are certain to furnish room for a detour till he finds some sociable fact of the open world. Then he feels at home. Then that quaint, radiant smile flashes across his face like warm sunshine. When his thought can be put in terms of nature he feels pleased with the thought and speaks like the oracle, with neither hesitation nor impediment. Truly Emerson is among the high functionaries in the literature of nature. He is radiant like a sun, and Spring comes with him.

Men are bending to the task of interpreting the sea. Let them have room. Two volumes by T. Jenkins Hains, "The Wind Jammers" and "The Strife of the Sea," are practical efforts in a new latitude—the life of the sea; its denizens, penguin, and albacore, and the loggerhead, and the doughty folk who traffic in those fierce latitudes where life is ever neighboring with death and for a trifle fling life overboard, to toss a moment on the crest of storm and then plunge out of sight forever. He helps the great sea to get

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

at us. I think his interpretations more salt with the sea than Bullen's "The Cruise of the Cachetot."

Norman Duncan's "The Way of the Sea" is gloomy as the Labrador coasts and fierce as the ice crush in the night. The glooms of the ocean are here, and we may fairly feel the darkness settle down on the sea and sullen coast and us. His books, "Dr. Luke of the Labrador" and "The Cruise of the Shining Light," are to be held in perpetual regard in that they give a sense of the ruthlessness of northern seas and the stolid heroism of northern fisher-folk, which floats into the blood as the shifting ice flow shifts along the bitter coasts with wrecked ships and wrecked seamen crushed in their floe or tilting on tilting ice pans solitary wrecked sea-folk float toward shore or doom. The heartless sea wed to the heartless winter is here bitterly drawn as in Pierre Loti's "An Iceland Fisherman," and, I think, more fiercely. With all its ocean ruthlessness, the fascination lingers, gripping all the many it touches—even us.

Chief of the men of the sea since Homer and Tennyson, stands Joseph Conrad. All his books haunt the sea and are a wandering to the sea. Sea-born, sea-bred they are. Bullen's "The Cruise of the Cachetot" is a powerful book, but must give way to Conrad. He has a book, "The Mirror of the Sea," which might be entitled "Memorabilia of the Atlantic." In it, that mad water, stretching from pole to pole, has its whim-

## THE LITERATURE OF NATURE

sicality, its brutality, its splenetic angers, its curious unrest, its bitter beat and break of sea waves on sea wastes or sea walls. These anger through all the book.

Yet, after all, not in his intentional descriptions of the ocean is Conrad great as in his fictions into which the seas walk like a man in slumber. In "Heart of Darkness" is such a picture of the penetralia of an African forest and loneliness as has never been written either by David Livingstone or Henry M. Stanley. And those who affirm this to be the greatest short story ever written are not quite witless. Yet in that forest shag and shadow and swelter of heat and horror of tropic loneliness, the river adventures from the scene to the sea. Conrad is always sea-bound. "Nostromo" beside the sea makes footpath to the sea. Even the high mountain is footing it to the sea to become voyager.

"Victory" is a magical atmosphere, unrepeatable, unspeakable, the atmosphere of the South Seas. "Lord Jim"—it smokes of the tropics and with the unforgivableness of the sea, and "Youth" breaks as a golden morning with the eternal wealth of youth (and of the sea) with its hope and undefeat, and is aromatic with the ocean and its perils. "Chance" brings, as it were a cargo, the desultory mandates of the sea which seem to breathe the stories of all those happenings which have sown the sea to battles and broken wrecks and triumphs and discovery and

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

voyagings and world circumnavigations and bubbles blown, not from the frenzied sea waves, but from the lips of men about to die.

In my belief no author has approached Conrad in power of interpretation of furious seas. Loti has caught the northern lights upon the waters, but Conrad has twisted fingers into the tossing mane of the leonine sea when storm worked its hugest tragedies and direst, and would not be shaken loose. The "Children of the Sea," or as it is again called after the name having dropped from the book for a while, "The Nigger or Narcissus," is Conrad's sea at wrath and is away and beyond the maddest, mightiest, most effective effort ever made by man to catch the triumphal fury of the angry deep. The effort is so gigantic and terrible and formidable, so crushing, so compelling, as to set a seal of silence on the lips that would coin admiration into words. The waves crush, thunder, applaud their own fury, drench, build green precipices, lurch like drunken devils, stammer as if affecting the oratory of eternity, blur the sky with their skirts of spray. And as you read be confounded by its tumult and sublimity and be proud that a man has so far matched oceanic moods. In Charles Reade's "Very Hard Cash" there are two special sea scenes which I think may compete with the storm in "David Copperfield," but all of these are comparative still life when the crushing sea wave hurls its voices and its sea avalanches in Conrad's sea-

## THE LITERATURE OF NATURE

wrath book. Put this book under your pillow in the dark and you shall hear the sea storm through your dreams.

It would be unforgivable to forbear to mention "White's Selborne," for it has the proper nature aroma, namely, looking narrowly at things that are close at home and knowing that they are worth while, and that any little space of ground where birds come and go and growing things aspire into the sky and where the clouds come with rain and the nights come with stars, is ample kingdom enough for a nature body to be emperor of for a lifetime. My own copy of "White's Selborne" has the pictures colored by hand and makes a totally informing and inspiring volume.

To be sure, read Ike Walton out fishing with his "Complete Angler" and wandering by the river Dove and knowing a good deal about fishing and baits and river banks, and wading in the river waters and babbling about these things as the brooks babble where the incline is steep and the waters run with eagering haste. Always is sweet Ike Walton more concerned with the wandering along the stream than about fishing in the stream, though his garrulosity would not always incline you so to say. But a blessing on him forever. And a thanksgiving to God that so many have loved him and that he has become a cult because God's out-of-doors was dear to him.

And a body writing of nature literature should

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

not pass by that womanly book and beautiful. Miss Mitford's "Our Village," in which is woman cheer and talk and quickness of vision and love of children and dogs and special love of little boys, with all their racket, and her perception of the loveliness of lowliness and the neighborliness of neighbors and her "Violetting" and her hazel-nutting, and her going to cops and shaw and woods and stream a-wandering, and dust and drench of country road, and her finding the first primrose, and the having ecstasies in the cops and wood and dell, and her love of cowslips—all make her so sweet a wander-woman and wonder-woman that as the days go past hurriedly or unhurriedly, this woodsy book "Our Village" is coming into the hands of ten thousands who sit and read and love the quiet wonder of it all, and the vivacity of it all and give thanks to God that that woman dwelt in an English village where the houses are all old, and the woods were grown and arched across the road, and the landscape was always rolling and nearly always green, and the streams always near, and English flowers flamed in hedge-row and on hillside by the witless waters.

And then there is "Lorna Doone." Is there a nature book its equal? Can Ruskin, with all his delicacy of touch, like the coming of the dusk, quite stand alongside of Blackmore? Can anybody so worm nature's secrets out as "gert Jan Ridd"? That hand, so ponderous that it can

## THE LITERATURE OF NATURE

wrench from its socket the oak limb as if it were a grass blade, can caress the flowers that dapple the meadows of the Lynn. He is all but incomparable, this Jan, with his heart tender as a child's and his eyes seeing and knowing what he sees and his words flitting into poems, though he thinks them crude. In weary winter days I have read this nature story through, to beckon spring into my sky; and it has not failed me yet. The atmosphere of nature is here, and it never quits us any more than it does Plover's Barrows farm, where the Ridds dwell in gentle quiet, whatever the Doones may do. They are so much a part of the landscape that, like forests when storms are spent, they sink back into somnolence and great peace. "Here are trees and bright green grass and orchards full of contentment, and a man may scarce espy the brook though he hears it everywhere. And, indeed, a stout good piece of it comes through our farmyard and swells sometimes to a rush of waves when the clouds are on the hilltops. But all below, where the valley bends and the Lynn stream goes along with it, pretty meadows slope their breast and the sun spreads on the water." Here is a book which touches our hearts "with a sudden delight, like a cowslip blossom and the sweetest flowers of spring," and is "like a wood rayed through with sunset." A body cannot read "*Lorna Doone*" through and not be converted into a lover of nature.

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

And our American poets are dwellers in tents in the fields, save Edgar Allan Poe. His weird, fantastic genius is huge with the lurid expectation of the soul, and if he had described nature, had probably wrought a landscape such as Dante shaped for Hell or Purgatory. Whittier and Bryant and Lowell and Lanier may always be looked for where dawns touch mountain top or prairie or sea. Lowell is dewy as the morning; and flowers and willows and Indian summers haunt him. The hills are a rapture to staid Whittier; and he is a rioter in such things as God has set in beauty out of doors. In going through his poems the other day, I was more gladdened than at any previous reading in that quest of his, flower-ward, wood-ward, stream-ward, lake-ward, mountain-ward, but always outward to the world of naked things that love the daylight and the stars. Prairie and stream follow Bryant like his shadow; the marshes of the sea run silver rivulets fresh from the far deep among the nodding grasses where Lanier stands meditant; Riley is "knee deep in June" or "Over to Old Aunt Mary's"; Walt Whitman swaggers out in the open road; Longfellow slips from his beloved books long enough to listen with little Hiawatha "to the lapping of the water," or wade into black shadows of "the forest primeval"; Tennyson is never out of sight and hearing of the sea; John Davidson, though in London town, is out where

## THE LITERATURE OF NATURE

Rivers high-hearted run;  
And hedges mantle with a flush of green.  
The curlew calls me where the salt winds blow;  
    His troubled note dwells mournfully and dies;  
    Then the long echo cries  
Deep in my heart. Ah, surely I must go!  
For there the tides, moon-haunted, ebb and flow;  
And there the sea board murmurs resonant;  
    The waves their interwoven fugue repeat  
    And brooding surges beat  
A slow, melodious, continual chant;

and Archibald Lampman strays where September haunts the windy hills. We are out of doors. For this mercy bless Him who made the waste places. We are out in the waste places and feel at home.

I think some time to write an essay on “Shakespeare as Nature Lover.” He was freckled with the sun and his bare feet were always wet with the dew: and the smell of violets was ever on his face. Though he burrowed in London town, he was always in intent out of doors where the Hebrew prophets stayed, than which no sturdier word can be pronounced.

### III

## SELFISH WOMANHOOD

To discourse, with Selfish Womanhood for theme, sins alike against my wishes and my chivalry. I like it not. But the facts of the soul are not to be dimmed or demolished by what we may wish. Obscuration, were it possible, is not annihilation. We must face facts bravely. And literature has this for its praise, that it has faced the facts, and that in its pages may the face of the world be seen as by clear sunlight. A reading of the imaginative literature of all the ages will show what sort of a world we have had for playfellow and workfellow. Its sins, blameworthiness, frivolities, weaknesses, foibles, playfulness, grossness, perverseness, manliness, womanliness, greatness, littleness, imaginativeness, matter-of-factness, tyranny, love of freedom, democracy, aristocracy, goodness, vileness, devilhood, angelhood—they are all in literature. Not a syllable is missing. The eternal commonplace and the eternal uncommonplace are brought out to the light and left like furniture at house-cleaning time, out of doors for the world passing along that street to look at.

Here is where and this is how books are the

## SELFISH WOMANHOOD

informants of life. We who live with women and men ought to know our neighbors. We cannot in ourselves and in themselves because that sort of insight belongs to the few and not to the many; and we belong not to the few but to the many. I cannot read the lines on my neighbor's face, much less the lines on my neighbor's soul; but if Shakespeare will come and be physiognomist and psychognomist, they will become patent to my poor eyes. No teacher nor any preacher ought to be without a rude information in Shakespeare's psychology. To know folks is a larger need in both these vocations than the rudiments of knowledge each can impart. We are dealing with the alive, a thing we are prone to forget. Now, blessed be the man who finds some new corner of the soul to explore and bring into the daylight. That is the all but impossible in letters. All ways have been trod, we think and feel. Who can go where the geniuses have not gone? But men do. Browning found out some things about the soul of man. The explorers are not yet become invalids. There is room and call for them. And while, answering extemporaneously, we would say that every island, bay, and trivial inlet of the soul has been visited and charted; when a large life walks through the continents and takes ship across the seas of soul he convinces us we were no prophets. The genius finds something new, adds new emphasis, squeezes new juice out of the

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

old grapes, finds a new petal on a flower; and we are illumined. Had we been asked if after Chaucer, Shakespeare, Tennyson, Browning, Æschylus, Homer, Sophocles, and Euripides, and Goethe there were any woman types not exploited, I think an unhesitant "No" had sprung to every lip. But we would have answered untruly, not knowing the truth. Swinburne has found the fact in itself not new, but in its elucidation new as morning. He has created a Mary Stuart. The curious thing is that after a type of personality has behaved itself in our sight we do not understand it. But this is the blindness I made mention of. Cleopatra lived; and I doubt if anybody ever really saw her till Shakespeare met her in Marc Antony's company and recognized her. That is an amazing portrait he has made, if it be lawful to name that a portrait which is a living thing. And Swinburne came three centuries after Mary Stuart had smiled her last bewitching smile and saw her and knew her at sight.

Selfish Womanhood has not been talked much of by letters. I presume because books are mainly men-written. And a man is disinclined to give women vices which are not heroic. Lady Macbeth is vice but regal vice, and the queen to Cymbeline has a sort of generalship in her crime which marks her of a breed of rulers. Anyway, the depicting of a pure selfishness in woman was, so far as my knowledge goes or my memory recalls, left to our time and to Swinburne. His

## SELFISH WOMANHOOD

historical Trilogy embodies the working out of this concept, and does it in a way to waken wonder. We have in thought that Swinburne is a lyric poet. Or, if I do not err, this is how the mention of his name impresses us. We think of him as a singing lark, more words and music than penetrative thought. His command of language and rhythm is something to startle and delight. He can swim on in seas of music farther and get less wheres than almost anybody who ever lived. He is peerless in our day as music maker with words, and even in those days when Tennyson was our Nestor, Swinburne could have often given this aged glory lessons in music.

He opens his throat and the music gushes out birdlike, but only music. As little semblance of thought is there as a body could imagine. It goes but gets nowhere, and is bewitching. A master in the art of poetic expression is what we have thought him to be. Sensuous, classic, the nearest to a Greek since Keats—so have we classified him. “Atalanta in Calydon” is where we thought him at home. Now the Trilogy consisting of “Chastelard,” “Bothwell,” and “Mary Stuart” is Swinburne in the unexpected, and contains a wealth of explication of one theme which is quite bewildering. And the theme is a woman beautiful enough to make men avid to die for her and selfish enough to make her avid to see men die for her.

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

Selfishness I would designate and differentiate as impure and pure. Impure selfishness is selfishness with an objective. Goneril and Regan in "Lear" and Becky Sharpe in "Vanity Fair" illustrate this breed. These wanted something for self-benefit. They farmed fields for what they could grow on them which would come to their granaries. Goneril and Regan farmed their father for his kingdom, farmed their husbands for what use they could be. They had an eye to the main chance. This is the customary selfishness. Becky Sharpe, become a classic now, was a shrewd bargainer. She was horse jockey with men. She farmed everybody in sight that she might feast, and if she could not feast she would drink tea; but some one must buy the feast or the tea. She would have the nearest buyer do that. She was not choice in agents. She would take the one she could lay her hands on easiest. That was all. She was a human cat, always watching for the biggest mouse, but taking what she could catch with a purr of content and a lick of her lips. In her is not a symptom of lust. She is as barren of lewdness as of love. She is simply taking a tool, Rawdon Crawley, then grieved beyond measure finding she could have had Crawley or King's Crawley, dirt and all, then Lord Steyne, and after all else was gone taking silly, vain, inglorious brother to Amelia Sedley after having used Amelia's husband; then she used the church, not having access to a man. She is utilitarian

## SELFISH WOMANHOOD

simply. Not a froth of even temporary passion is to be thought of in her. She wants a foot mat to wipe her feet on. Who comes serves the turn.

The pure selfishness is evidenced in Mary Queen of Scots. I know not her twin anywhere in letters. Cleopatra was licentious, lewd, torrid—all that, but seemed to give herself with her temporary or permanent passion. Mary Stuart is not so. She is simple languor. She has no end to compass. She is not climbing a throne, rather pulling a throne down upon herself. She has no ulterior motives. With her, love is a species of æsthetics. She likes it for herself rather than for itself. Love with her knows not self-sacrifice as such. Love means love. She covets the touch of a Chastelard's hand for the sake of seeing him in his eagerness. She is quite incomprehensible and so quite inexplicable; and to have conceived her as Swinburne has is a work of genius complex, bewildering. With the accredited facts of Mary Stuart's career I have no commerce now. She is known, her beauty, malice, hatreds, vengeances, murders, ruthlessnesses, perfidies, pathos, tragedy, and all. I have stood at her tomb in Westminster Abbey, and dreamed of her, attempting to see her face and guess her secret, but could not. She rose misty as sea crags in a storm. She was quite beyond my man's wit. Such as she was Swinburne has taken hold on to make her blaze. To think what he has achieved, fills me with

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

wonder. I marvel it lay in any man's power with such persistent consistency to have caught and retained a personality tenuous as air, hot and fitful like fire, compassionless alike to those who loved her as to those she hated most. I cannot tell of it. That were to blur the image as winds do the images in water. All must read and make their life wonder. Through the longest drama in literature, this strange, peerless tigress makes her way, we not understanding her nor she herself; she the play and the torture of her own loves, freaked with by passion's winds, fearless with passion's adulation, tripped with lust's resolves, drowned in lust's seas, skyless, godless, unnatural, feminine of the feminine, unfeminine as granite, all heart, no heart, as lacking in moral sense as if she had been a lioness—some such was Mary Stuart.

With women as with men, but with women in regal wise, love means sacrifice. No woman counts cost with love. Ariadne fled with Jason, and Dido found a world desolate because Æneas had sailed away. A woman in love is nothing but a heart. All else might be sheared away with shrewd sword blade and she not know it nor ever miss it. She knows not any sacrifice, will not believe the thing she did that made men marvel had aught of marvel in it; indeed, never knew she did it nor will believe the narrative when told her. In her love she is not an integer. If anything will make a woman devout

## SELFISH WOMANHOOD

and wonderful it is love. She is transfigured as the mountains are when smitten with the sunset splendor. Love finds a woman for herself and to herself and to the world. Now, none of this is visible in Mary Stuart. She will truly take long, fearful rides across the Scotch hills to sight dear Bothwell, but only as a species of gratification. She is on a pleasure party. No sacrifice is in it. It is a tigress passion. She was inhuman truly, but unhuman just as truly. No queen's grace of sacrifice or heart is visible in her.

For icy Philip Mary Tudor had heartaches fit to die; but that is not present in Mary Stuart. The present thing satisfies. Out of sight, was to be forbidden to her thought. She lived in the senses. Her heart had no memory. She could not recollect. Things seen were her sensualism. She was immoral enough; but that is not the horrible thing about Queen Mary to my thought. She was unmoral. I do not find the dregs of ethics in her character. She was let of the blood of right and wrong. If she had conscience, there is not the semblance of it. It must have had such immurement as precludes ever walking out of its leper's cell. She is like a snake. I feel her lissome, glittering fascination, but feel her serpent. There was no mercy in her calendar, no devotion to any cause. Religion was like a string of pearls around her lily neck, to be clasped and unclasped to show her fingers or adorn her beauty. She was feminine, but not

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

a woman. She would have seen a multitude die to satisfy her spleen or petty vengeance. There never was a choking in her throat or any mist of tears or any horror for any heartache. The world meant to her—herself. Calypso was in love with Ulysses: Mary was in love with Mary. There was her lust of love. Goethe practiced vivisection on women: Mary Stuart practiced vivisection on men. She was ruthless, but something more. She loved the writhing, seeing it attested her power. Parrhasius slew an aged slave to paint his dying groan; but Mary Stuart did so to enjoy the groan and feel she made it, and that it attested her power.

Chastelard says to Mary Beaton:

“I know her ways of loving, all of them:  
A sweet, soft way the first is; afterward  
It burns and bites like fire; the end of that  
Charred dust and eyelids bitten through with smoke.”

Chastelard knew her and her tigress nature, but nothing loath, therefore, to beg another kiss and die therefor.

Chastelard’s love with all its golden wealth of gorgeous sacrifice for her, her unshamed selfishness with him are set each against the other. Chastelard is as great as she is incapable of greatness. She loves him briefly in presence because such love is necessary to her life; and she dotes on it, for it shows how she occupies a brave man’s life. She likes to make a foot mat of a man. He is saying:

## SELFISH WOMANHOOD

“Since my days were counted for a man’s  
I have loved you; yea, how past sense and help  
Whatever thing was bitter to my love  
I have loved you. How when I rode in war  
Your face went floating in among men’s helms,  
Your voice went through the shriek of slipping swords.”

To which the sensuous queen replies in languid phrase,

“I love you best of them;  
Clasp me quite round till your lips cleave on mine—  
False mine that did you wrong.”

He dreams:

“When sometime God can no more refrain  
To lay death like a kiss across your lips—  
Then after all your happy reach of life  
For pity you shall touch me with your eyes.”

To all of which the queen replies: “You talk too sadly.” She half shrieks: “You will be slain and I get shame, God’s mercy.” She is never from her own thoughts.

“O I do love you more than all men,  
What shall I give you to be gone?  
Mind, you must die.  
Alas, poor lord, you have no sense of me;  
I shall be deadly to you.”

Chastelard is condemned to die and all for love of her, and she sends him his pardon, and then fearing his pardon will work her harm goes into his prison to ask of him the pardon back. But in talking aloud to herself she cannot keep herself out:

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

“Though he be mad indeed  
It is the goodliest madness ever smote  
Upon man’s heart. A kingly knight in faith,  
Meseems my face can yet make faith in men  
And break their brains with beauty: for a word,  
An eyelid’s twitch, an eye’s turn, tie them fast  
And make their souls cleave home. God be thanked  
This air has not yet curdled all the blood  
That went to make me fair. An hour agone  
I thought I had been forgotten of men’s love  
More than dead women’s faces are forgot  
Of after lovers. All men are not of earth:  
For all the frost of fools and this cold land,  
There be some yet catch fever of my face  
And burning for mine eyes’ sake. I did think  
My time was gone when men would dance to death  
As to a music, and lie laughing down  
In the grave, and take their funerals for their feasts  
To get one kiss of me. I have some strength yet.”

And this, while brave, great Chastelard lies in his prison doomed to die for her and she does meditate to bring him forth; yet her power, her beauty, her witchery, her gloating over men allured to die for her—this fills her thought. Why, I know nothing so horrible. This naked treachery of barren selfishness goes through my flesh as Lady Macbeth’s bleeding dagger knows not how to do. She thinks aloud once more, meditating to pardon him who only wants a kiss to make him glad to die. How cheap and tinsel-made is Mary matched with him!

“Let fame go—  
I care not much what shall become of fame,  
So I save love—and do mine own soul right;  
I’ll have my mercy help me to revenge

## SELFISH WOMANHOOD

On all the crew of them. How will he look,  
Having my pardon! I shall meet sweet thanks  
And love of good men for my mercy's love—  
Yea, and be quit of these I hate to death,  
With one good deed."

Her love shades out of sight, her glare of vengeance walks in bloody-eyed and sworded. She fears and feels she must make haste into the prison to cajole the pardon from the hand of him she pardoned. Outside the prison the preacher calls: "The mercy of a harlot is a sword," and Chastelard within the prison muses:

"I knew not that a man so sure to die  
Could care so little;  
But I shall not forget  
For any sleep this love bound upon me  
For any sleep or quiet ways of death.  
Ah, in my weary, dusty space of sight  
Her face will float with heavy scents of hair.  
I am not fit to live but for love's sake,  
So I were best dead shortly."

And when Mary Beaton brings the queen's reprieve which Queen Mary is on her road to take back lest it work her hurt, he, taking the reprieve from Mary Beaton's hands, tears it lest it should work his queen a moment's harm, so great is he, so little is the queen. And talking on:

"I wonder will *she* come,  
Sad at her mouth a little,  
To lean her head on mine."

And the queen entering with a

"What! Is one here? Speak to me for God's sake!"

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

And his quick answer,

“Here, Madam, at your hand.”

And her

“Brief, I pray you, give me that again.”

Chastelard’s

“What, my reprieve?”

Queen:

“Even so, deny me not  
For your sake mainly.  
Must I pluck it out?

You do not love me: no, nor honor. Come;  
I know you have it about you, give it me.”

And he:

“I cannot yield you such a thing”;

and she:

“A coward! What shift now?  
Do such men make such cravens?”

Chastelard:

“Chide me not:  
Pity me that I cannot help my heart.”

The Queen:

“Heaven mend mine eye that took you for a man!  
Nay, but for shame what have you done with it?”

His answer:

“Why, there it lies torn up.”

She:

“God help me, sir! Have you done this?”

You would have thought that such as he would have made a woman of even such as she. But

## SELFISH WOMANHOOD

think it not. She is selfishness beyond all help or courage. And after fondling him she means to let be slain, and he half moaning, half singing,

“For I do think  
You never will be loved thus in your life,”

she replies with his death staring at her and she could alter it and will not:

“It may be a man may never love me more.”

O Selfishness! Your name is Mary Stuart!

And when he comes to die, last of all, he craves her pardon, in hearing of them all he craves, “Forgive me, Madam,” to shield her against a breath of blame when wild winter winds of blame were hers in just desert, and to his fond “Forgive me, Madam,”

“Yea, I do, fair sir:  
With all my heart, in all I pardon you,”

and he shoulders out alone to die and the queen still saying to Mary Beaton,

“I will be his ransom if I die,”

and then stood by and saw him dying with his smile upon her nor even lifted up her hand, and went to be the paramour of my lord Bothwell.

We cannot weep for her. We must not pray. And selfishness like this is crueler than cruel waves that swallow sinking sailors up; and ten thousand fold more tragic than the grave.

## IV

### TENNYSON'S MEN

THE perpetual quantities in the world are men and women and God. They are the undying folk; and therefore interest in these three like immortelles, unwithering. Each high priest in literature takes his turn in ministration at this altar. The materials with which the artist must work do not multiply. Marble and chisel and mallet and the artist's hands and dreams—these are the sum total possessions of Phidias and Praxiteles and Milo and Thorwaldsen and Flaxman and Powers and Story. The Metopes of the Parthenon, the Venus of Milo, the Judith slaying Holofernes, are, so to say, hewn from the same quarry. It is so with the materials of poetry, dream, life. Men, women, God—all things are possible with these. They are all the factors there are. Air we thought was composed of oxygen and hydrogen when Lord Rayleigh discovered argon; but there is no new discovery touching the air of life since the far days of Plato and the still remoter days of the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey." Things remain unchanged, untouched. Kant and Hegel are not wiser than Plato of the fertile imagination and the broad brow. Literature is the art of the kaleidoscope. As you turn the glass new combinations

## TENNYSON'S MEN

ensue; but the pieces are the same. Just as, when you have the alphabet, no thoughts are beyond its power of expression. That column of symbols seems so inartistic, so insignificant, so devoid of poetry, as expressionless as dust. And then to remember how all great dreams are run into this mold. Æschylus, Dante, Chaucer, Schiller, Cervantes, Milton, Ruskin, Tennyson, Lowell, Shakespeare can shut their purple twilights in the sky this alphabet offers. In such conception the alphabet becomes magical as a music-making sea. Men, women, and God are the alphabet of history, biography, prose fiction, poetry. Each new artist takes up this hourglass, holds it against the light to see the golden sands run down. Tennyson deals with these factors as if he were the first artist born. If he be gifted—for there are no precedents to the inspired poet—every man begins at the beginning. He must feel his way as we do in the dark in new localities. Tennyson takes up the old alphabet to see whether it can spell out any new words. I hope, in that far, fair land which holds him, he knows the world he lived in and has loved thinks he succeeded.

If Tennyson's men are compared with Shakespeare's men they fail in vigor, health, and the contagious quality. Shakespeare's men are as robust as frontiersmen. When in their company we fly rather than walk or run. We are to be classed with the winged creatures. Tennyson's men walk, but are men. They are somber, but are

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

men. They live in a mellow light as in a cathedral. His poetry is cathedral light rather than sunlight. Nor is this slurring, nor yet undervaluing either his poetry or his men. Cathedrals, with their dim light, are good places to see in. There is no glare. The world is remote. The studied quiet, half cloister, half calm that follows after tempest, rests there as if after long journey. There is reticence, seclusion, exclusion. Shakespeare stood out under the open sky at noon bareheaded like Cæsar on the march. Tennyson sits in where the lights are toned to suit eyes not used to sunlight. I think we can imagine few places so adapted to get right estimate of life as to sit in Westminster Abbey in a stall of the Knights of Bath, where above you waves in fitful fashion a banner moth-eaten, sword-cut, yet waves fitful to and fro; and against a wall hangs a morion a knight used to wear; and the dim light, hallowed as if consecrated to sacred purposes, shuts your thought in, while all things environing conspire to give a man right views of life if this capacity be not atrophied in him. Cathedral light and air breed right estimates, so that in saying Tennyson is cathedral light we have not subtracted from his adequacy to conceive life and character aright. I do not feel Tennyson's men as I do Browning's, but do not in so saying underrate them. I love those hushed retreats where in cloister lights I may look men close in the face. Tennyson furnishes this necessary quality. He

## TENNYSON'S MEN

has done as no one else. To my eyes he stands as on an eminence alone, and needs dim light so he may see the better. In the dusk of distance or cathedral or twilights he sees as he can see under no other condition. Sir John Oldcastle is clearer to his eyes than the Duke of Wellington. This explains why his men were remote, medieval, or ancient; or if modern, as Enoch Arden, with no sign of modernity upon them.

To continue, for working purposes, the comparison between Tennyson and Shakespeare, Shakespeare's men are unreligious and Tennyson's men are religious. I have not designated Shakespeare's men as unreligious. Considered as a company they are not that. Some of them are grossly so. They outrage us to the point of anger. Angelo and Iachimo and Falstaff and Iago put our moral blood at boiling heat at low altitudes. But what is intended is that all Tennyson's men seem built on the intended moral plan; and Shakespeare's have no such appearance. They may be moral or immoral, but they are so as it happens, as their shadows fall, unintended. Tennyson's men are aware of their moral selves. They are apprised they have ethical make-up. They feel at whatever remove they may be from God or good that they must face their dereliction. Nothing of that is apparent in Shakespeare: Macbeth is unconsciously moral. Banquo gets the upper hand of Macbeth, not through conscious, but through unconscious moral constitution. Shakespeare is aware that man is a

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

moral being; but his men are not. They are subconscious folk. They are as they are by instinct. They cannot escape themselves; and just as the panther has unknown to himself the feline tread and spring and terrible lust for death, so man has his subconscious nature on him. As tears are salt, man is moral in make-up. He fronts God, but not in purpose nor in knowledge. God is not down in his book of days. Shakespeare's men are simply instinctively moral. I catch not a glimpse of him contriving a set moral personality. He was so accurate that he knew there were no men not molded in moral matrix. He saw men as they were. But Tennyson has always that moral sense in the foreground. I can never look one of his men in the eyes that I do not see the moral light in them. He is a soul. He has that sense which never wavers. The pomp of moral purpose is on them all. Truly, the form of this presence varies. Sometimes we note its lack, sometimes its presence. All I appeal to is that we cannot be quit of the feeling that Tennyson was sure his men were sure they were men who must and did face God. The "Idyls of the King" mean that, that only, that ever. In those dear poems we are at church as certainly as if we were in a cathedral. In his Alcaic specimen, "Milton," note how

O mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies,  
O skilled to sing of Time or Eternity,

is named

## TENNYSON'S MEN

"God-gifted organ-voice of England,  
Milton, a name to resound for all ages."

God has something, somewhere to do in all the men Tennyson has at heart. He has learned this of the Bible, doubtless, which book is not oppressed with moralities but suffused with them and transfigured by them. "The Grandmother" has this to say:

"To be sure, the preacher says our sins shall make us sad:  
But mine is a time of peace, and there is Grace to be had;  
And God, not man, is the Judge of us all when life shall cease;  
And in this Book, little Annie, the message is one of Peace.

.....

"So Willy has gone, my beauty, my eldest-born, my flower;  
But how can I weep for Willy? he has but gone for an hour;  
Gone for a minute, my son, from this room into the next;  
I too shall go in a minute. What time have I to be vexed?"

The babbling old body feels the eternal and has the hand of moral life holding her whether she would or not. The "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington" rises toward the master matters of the soul as it proceeds:

And while we hear  
The tides of Music's golden sea  
Setting toward eternity,  
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

Until we doubt not that for one so true  
There must be other nobler work to do  
Than when he fought at Waterloo,  
And Victor he must ever be.  
For though the Giant Ages heave the hill  
And break the shore, and evermore  
Make and break and work their will;  
Though world on world in myriad myriads roll  
Round us, each with different powers,  
And other forms of life than ours,  
What know we greater than the soul?  
On God and godlike men we build our trust.

Speak no more of his renown.  
Lay your earthly fancies down,  
And in the vast cathedral leave him,  
God accept him, Christ receive him.

Here is such word as Shakespeare would not have thought to wave above a bier. The word "soul" and the magnificat of it are Tennysonian, and in the manner of man's sensing himself and the keen discernment between what wastes and what abides of him. And the verse, "On God and godlike men we build our trust," may be set down to the sound of sea music as the Christian philosophy of life and history. This moral manner is not obtrusive but is intrusive. It is wherever man walks. This morality is the dirt on which this poet's men tread as well as the spirit out of which these men are blown. All the men have it. Some good, some bad, but the faces turn like the faces of Dante in the shades toward the Face in fear or hope, but turn wistful, wonderful, and oftentimes sublime. The English battle cries in the drama of Harold are

## TENNYSON'S MEN

"Harold and God Almighty." Withal, this is the juice of the ripe grapes of this poet vintage. Man and God Almighty, one man and God; and these make and retain moralities for the soul. Reduce man to little or naught, reduce God to little or naught, one or both; and the morality is dead, though you know not where it be buried. So once and for all we shall hold all Tennyson's men for moral. The sense of freedom is in their wrong as in their right; and freedom makes a man.

Life is fenced in as by bold mountains by three things—work, love, religion. Watch these great, glorious hills and see whether or not they do include life. Put into the infinitive mood, which is the mood of free existence, we shall find four phrases—to be, to work, to love, to pray. And if these four terse statements appear to be contradictory of the three terms in which it was affirmed life might be put, look again and ponder that the first of the four phrases is, "to be," namely, life. That infinitive is existence; and the latter statement quadrates point for point with the three-term statement; and the four-term statement quadrates point for point with the three-term statement. To be, equals life; and life is to work and love and pray, or work, love, religion. And men may be classed, all of them, not one omitted, as workers, lovers, religionists. Here, then, we place Tennyson's men, workers, lovers and God-men. But because the enumeration may be elucidated in a brief article by the intercalation of a

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

subclass which, in fact, belongs to all the three classes specified, I have grouped them in companies, where some of them are not less their major fact, but where is some gain or lack which makes them plainly brothers. All Tennyson's men, then, for present purposes shall be grouped under four heads:

- I. Men with a flaw in the harness, less or more.
- II. Workers.
- III. Lovers.
- IV. Religious men.

### I

The men of the fatal flaw. They are Lancelot, Merlin, Geraint, Balin, Balan, Modred, Gawain, Lucretius, King Philip, Sir Tristram, Sir Percivale, Earl Doorm, and Sir Aylmer. What is here attempted, as hardly needs be said, is a characterization, not an interpretation. These men will be seen to be in one or more of the threefold classes—workers, lovers, or religionists. Who fails in one is apt to fail in all, because life is so coherent. Lancelot I name the king of men whose hurt is the flaw in the harness. He is so great that we dare hope the highest of him. He did, he loved, he failed in religion. To whomsoever that failure comes it is catastrophal. There is no half-way house in goodness. Virtue is abrupt. There is no parleying. “Art thou for me or against me?” is its solitary challenge. Lancelot was an achiever. He was king of tourney. He was a valiant leader

## TENNYSON'S MEN

of men. Men took to him. Women adored him. Elaine died for him. Queen Guinevere sinned for him. He was a vast lover, though a sinful lover. We watch him as we watch Marc Antony, with fascinated gaze. Those loves which wreck thrones are monumental, think of them as we may. This kingship in love, that puts all aside for it, makes us weep when this love is wrong. Such devotion makes our hearts ache. Lancelot had saved all this wreck of heart and kingdom and friendship and honor had he put manhood first; that is to say, had he put God first. Religion is an amazing preventive. It stands at the gate of life and says, "Be clean." Life must be aboveboard, unimpeachable, unafraid. Then no officer is a menace. Then conscience cannot make your face turn pale. Lancelot is too great to be bad. Greatness owes goodness to itself and to mankind. One touch of the illicit on Lancelot has put him among the wreckers of a realm.

Geraint fails in work. He was undoubted lover. He was redoubtable knight; but love, as Enid saw, though love for her, made him erratic and uxorious. Love instead of emboldening his arm and making its tendons all steel, weakened it until it was flabby as an arm of a paralytic. He was moping. He sat enjoying his wife's eyes, sunning himself in his wife's presence, feeling the fine thrill of holding her little hand. But Enid knew what man was for and what woman was for. She knew that love for a woman should

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

make a man all the more a man, and all the more a world influence and a soldier. She saw that love was dethroning Geraint, her beloved. That broke her heart. He heard her sobbing, suspected her, grew blackly jealous, grew cruel, and flung from amorist to achiever. This thrust him into the list of warriors again. At last he came to himself; but scarred he is. We feel about him as we do about Griffith Gaunt. He cannot quite get back into our esteem. Despite his purity and absoluteness in love, his flaw has shamed him. Man must be up and doing. He is built for the city and the mart, for the field and the fray. All things must but qualify for this. To love a woman is to make a man so much more, not so much less, a man of deeds. Discoverer Nansen's wife stood on the North far shore and saw her husband sail into the bleak ice fields, not knowing he should ever return, but waving him a valorous farewell and an encouragement. Washington's wife nerved him for his championship of liberty. Browning's wife helped his heart to sing that book of battle, "The Ring and the Book." Wordsworth's love made him so much the more a student and lover of Tintern Abbey and Yarrow, unvisited, visited, revisited. "Love qualifies" is what God has to say about it. And Geraint's shame was that, with him, love disqualified.

Merlin was a thinker. He was statesman behind the king, like Hamilton or Milton or Luther

## TENNYSON'S MEN

or De Tocqueville. He was the silent member of Cabinets, like the Duke of Sully. He was historian. The world's events are at the tips of his fingers. He thought with his feet, saw with his fingers. He weighed kingdoms as a grocer would weigh salt or spices. Merlin was a man of whom kings would be afraid. He was like Archimedes, contriver of Greek fire and lifter of ships from the sea by his engines of thought. Merlin was what the world names wise; and wisdom is a perilous gift. It may make its possessor haughty, arbitrary, unapproachable. Wisdom wrought none of these defects in Merlin. He seemed safe. He was old. He had mastered many tyrannies of trial. He trusted himself. And then a wily woman slew him. Say what you will regarding Tennyson's inability in making personalities dramatic, lissom Vivien's slaughter of wise Merlin is graphic as if written in fire. The entire history is apparent. Merlin from a woman's wiles fell into the reproach of helping slay a king and wreck a kingdom. Not that this is an unusual story, for it is pitifully usual. Samson suffered that defeat. Marc Antony suffered that defeat. Many a man besides Merlin has. Let that go. Defeat none the less it is, whatever multitude has been so slain. Stalwart duty, had Merlin adhered to that, had saved his secret, his manhood, him.

Balin and Balan, though two, I have put as one because their defect is identical. They are

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

ruins. They are clean, but they lack self-control. They lost honor and life at a stroke because they lost self-mastery. They blindly slew each other. They were born for better things. They meant well by their times and by themselves. Many virtues shone starlit in them. They loved each other—and slew each other. Alas for Balin and Balan! They are lost, not through cowardice, not through lust, but through not being kings of themselves.

Modred was a traitor, and we do not dare to stay with him. He sickens us. If he were master of any virtue we do not know it. He is a stench for the buzzards. Not man nor God will give him certificate of character. He is slow, sinister ambition. We fear

Modred's narrow, foxy face,  
Heart-hiding smile, and gray persistent eye.

He was eavesdropper. He stood with the ear at the door and overheard his mother's talk. Here is his character put on him by the poet:

But Modred leaned his ears beside the doors  
And there half heard: the same that afterward  
Struck for a throne, and, striking, found his doom.

He is hollow, false and bad. He wants a kingdom while he has no competency for being king. He scents scandals and breeds them. He does not know a man when he sees one; or he interprets others by himself. He does not know himself not a man. And all he has to hold him in

## TENNYSON'S MEN

the memory of the world is that his was the arm that fought against a manly king and slew him. It is his shame keeps him alive. Once Sir Lancelot found him hanging on a wall and spying on the queen and dragged him down and threw him in the dirt. From thenceforth Modred's hate to Lancelot and the queen had never intermission. He plotted against them until they were shamed and lost. In "Guinevere" this hate is put in poet's words like these:

Sir Modred; he that like a subtle beast  
Lay couchant with his eyes upon the throne,  
Ready to spring, waiting a chance: for this  
He chilled the popular praises of the king  
With silent smiles of slow disparagements;  
And tampered with the lords of the White Horse,  
Heathen, the brood by Hengist left; and sought  
To make disruption in the Table Round  
Of Arthur, and to splinter it into feuds  
Serving his traitorous end; and all his aims  
Were sharpened by strong hate for Lancelot.

And when he heard Pelleas hiss, "I have no sword," then Modred thought, "The time is hard at hand." His was a rankling hate. When Lancelot trod him down,

He smiled and went;  
But ever after the small violence done  
Rankled in him and ruffled all his heart  
As the sharp wind that ruffles all day long  
A little bitter pool about a stone  
On the bare coast.

And when King Arthur, with his broken heart at Guinevere's guilt and Lancelot's perfidy, was

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

summoning all his courage to the task of being a man under exigencies like these, there came a call out of his heart sad as the call of passing birds at night. "I hear the steps of Modred in the west." Then Modred slew the king and was himself slain. His dying was his only benefit to the kingdom.

Gawain was loyal but light. In him were qualities altogether winsome. I think you could but love him. He was airy, joyous, brave; and he died while fighting for his king. But some inherent fault kept him from the largest. Gawain was notionate, which identification is to be found in "The Last Tournament," where it is said,

Dagonet the fool, whom Gawain in his moods  
Had made mock knight of Arthur's Table Round.

His uncertainty of action is disclosed in "The Passing of Arthur," where it is told how

Then, ere that last weird battle in the west  
There came on Arthur sleeping, Gawain killed  
In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawain blown  
Along a wandering wind, and past his ear  
Went shrilling: "Hollow, hollow all delight!  
Hail, king! To-morrow thou shalt pass away.  
Farewell! There is an isle of rest for thee.  
And I am blown along a wandering wind,  
And hollow, hollow, hollow all delight!"  
And fainter onward, like wild birds that change  
Their season in the night and wail their way  
From cloud to cloud, down the long wind the dream  
Shrilled; but in going mingled with dim cries  
Far in the moonlit haze among the hills,  
As of some lonely city sacked by night,

## TENNYSON'S MEN

When all is lost, and wife and child with wail  
Pass to new lords; and Arthur woke and called:  
“Who spake? A dream. O light upon the wind.  
Thine, Gawain, was the voice—are these dim cries  
Thine? or doth all that haunts the waste and wild  
Mourn, knowing it will go along with me?”

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere and spake:  
“O me, my king, let pass whatever will,  
Elves, and the harmless glamour of the field;  
But in their stead thy name and glory cling  
To all high places like a golden cloud  
Forever: but as yet thou shalt not pass.  
Light was Gawain in life, and light in death  
Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man;  
And care not thou for dreams from him.”

And in “The Coming of Arthur” read:

And Gawain went, and breaking into song  
Sprang out, and followed by his flying hair  
Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he saw.

It is hard to think of a characterization which would better picture the light, fantastic, and what we may call springy way of Gawain than this passage. He had touches of robust manliness in him, for once when Pelleas was set upon by villains, three against one, and Gawain saw, his anger grew hot against such villainy.

And Gawain passing by  
Bound upon solitary adventure, saw  
Low down beneath the shadow of those towers  
A villainy, three to one: and through his heart  
The fire of honor and all noble deeds  
Flashed, and he called, “I strike upon thy side—”

and when Pelleas bade him forbear, so Gawain did; but

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

So Gawain, looking at the villainy done,  
Forebore, but in his heat and eagerness  
Trembled and quivered, as the dog, withheld  
A moment from the vermin that he sees  
Before him, shivers, ere he springs and kills.

And when Pelleas was taken and bound and shamed and spurned and thrust bounden out of doors:

Forth sprang Gawain, and loosed him from his bonds  
And flung them o'er the walls; and afterward,  
Shaking his hands, as from a lazar's rag,  
“Faith of my body,” he said, “and art thou not—  
Yea thou art he, whom late our Arthur made  
Knight of his Table; yea, and he that won  
The circlet? Wherefore hast thou so defamed  
Thy brotherhood in me and all the rest,  
As let these caitiffs on thee work their will?”

Such doings and such sayings make us laud the man and love him. He draws us to him as with irresistible grasp. But his fatal flaw was on him, and when he thrust his services upon Pelleas, Pelleas said,

“Betray me not, but help—  
Art thou not he whom men call light-of-love?”

Whereat Gawain’s light reply springs from his lips,

“Aye, for women be so light.”

And when Pelleas intrusts to him his case of love for Ettarre, then Gawain goes right manfully and like a knight blows bugle at the castle walls, comes into danger fearless as a king, but instead of representing Pelleas’s love, and plead-

## TENNYSON'S MEN

ing for it like a man, becomes himself the lover of Ettarre, forgets his knightly honor and the knight Pelleas, enters into sensuality; and when Pelleas creeps into the castle in the dark he finds Gawain and Ettarre locked in each other's arms, and calls with rigid truth:

"Alas, that ever knight should be so false!"  
And laid a naked sword athwart their naked throats.

Here stays Gawain, stripped of honor, called false by Pelleas and liar by Ettarre and shown fickle in love, so that though he was strong of strength, yet he was weak of manhood. Gereth made his claim unto the king:

"I have staggered thy strong Gawain in a tilt  
For pastime; yea, he said it."

And though Gawain were Modred's brother, who rose in treason against the king, Gawain was loyal to Arthur and died fighting his fight. Yet is his blemish on him like a cloud; and he is slain before his death.

Lucretius was fearless without manliness, purposing well, a free rover in the land of thought, who had come into the barren places where matter is all and God is naught and duty is but a silly falling of atoms into place. Fate is great. Merit is dead. Merit cannot stay alive where God is dead. A dreary, accurate poem, "Lucretius" might well mark Tennyson strong in religious things. He saw the futility and fatality of materialism. I suppose this poem is equipped

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

to make all men see, but does not. Drunk Lucretius is, drugged to death by a love potion given him by his wife Lucilia, thinking him false to her, though he is not, and in his drunken moaning rushes toward his grave and raves his materialism out.

“The Gods! and if I go, *my* work is left  
Unfinished—if I go. The Gods, who haunt  
The lucid interspace of world and world,  
Where never creeps a cloud, or moves a wind,  
Nor ever falls the least white star of snow,  
Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,  
Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to mar  
Their sacred, everlasting calm! and such,  
Not all so fine, nor so divine a calm,  
Not such, nor all unlike it, man may gain  
Letting his own life go. The Gods, the Gods!  
If all be atoms, how then should the Gods  
Being atomic not be dissoluble,  
Not follow the great law? My master held  
That Gods there are, for all men so believe.  
I prest my footsteps into his, and meant  
Surely to lead my Memmius in a train  
Of flowery clauses onward to the proof  
That Gods there are, and deathless. Meant? I  
meant?  
I have forgotten what I meant: my mind  
Stumbles, and all my faculties are lamed.”

He wails:

“Poor little life that toddles half an hour  
Crowned with a flower or two, and there an end—  
And since the nobler pleasure seems to fade,  
Why should I, beastlike as I find myself,  
Not manlike end myself?”

Suicide appeals to him as to all materialists. Lucretius had lost God; and hope is dead.

## TENNYSON'S MEN

Enough to say of King Philip, as visioned in "Queen Mary" and as known in history, that he was brute selfishness, save that such phrase does too much asperse the brute. Boisterous, mannish Mary, yet woman at the heart, died for love of him. But nothing he cared. He married her through cold, keen calculation, and was gladly quit of her who could deliver no kingdom to his hands. Philip had no heart. Love had no hearing in his gelid life. He was the very sediment of manhood.

Earl Doorm, slain of Geraint because he would have made Enid a concubine of his among a troop of others, is lust, nude, unspeakable, putrid, fierce, conquered, and tumbling down among his underlings a headless corpse which had never been a man. No one weeps for him. He was brutality advantaged with a throne.

How strange and how unfair it seems to set beside Earl Doorm the clean Sir Percivale! And in a way it is. He belongs not with Doorm nor Sir Tristram; but he failed; they failed. He failed and has his niche among the failure men. Sir Percivale failed to see that a man was higher type than a visionary. He left his king to die, hacked by the sword of traitors, while Sir Percivale wandered far, a pilgrim for a dream. He searched for the Grail and found it not, but had found the nobler grail of excellent service had he stayed at home and wrought knight's toil beside his king to keep the land for purity and

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

peace and law. For this failure in vision and service I stand Sir Percivale with the clean heart among the broken folk, slain by a flaw.

Dagonet, the fool, whom Gawain in his moods  
Had made mock-knight of Arthur's Table Round,  
At Camelot, high above the yellowing woods,  
Danced like a withered leaf before the hall.  
And toward him from the hall, with harp in hand,  
And from the crown thereof a carcanet  
Of ruby swaying to and fro, the prize  
Of Tristram in the jousts of yesterday,  
Came Tristram.

So does Sir Tristram come, though he is marching to his doom.

But newly enter'd, taller than the rest,  
And armored all in forest green, whereon  
There tript a hundred tiny silver deer,  
And wearing but a holly-spray for crest,  
With ever-scattering berries, and on shield  
A spear, a harp, a bugle—Tristram—late  
From overseas in Brittany returned,  
And marriage with a princess of that realm,  
Isolt the White—Sir Tristram of the Woods—  
Whom Lancelot knew, had held sometimes with pain  
His own against him, and now yearned to shake  
The burthen off his heart in one full shock  
With Tristram even to death: his strong hands gript  
And dinted the gilt dragons right and left,  
Until he groaned for wrath—so many of those,  
That ware their ladies' colors on the casque,  
Drew from before Sir Tristram to the bounds,  
And there with gibes and flickering mockeries  
Stood while he muttered: "Craven crest! O shame!  
What faith have these in whom they sware to love?  
The glory of our Round Table is no more."

And thus he recited to Dagonet the fool:

## TENNYSON'S MEN

"Free love—free field—we love but while we may:  
The woods are hushed, their music is no more.  
The leaf is dead, the yearning passed away:  
New leaf, new life—the days of frost are o'er:  
New life, new love, to suit the newer day:  
New loves are sweet as those that went before:  
Free love—free field—we love but while we may."

A muddy creed which marks a muddy man.  
Like creed, like man. Dagonet was right when  
he made reply to Sir Tristram:

"A helpful harper thou,  
That harpest downward! Dost thou know the star  
We call the harp of Arthur up in heaven?"

"It makes a silent music up in heaven."

And down the city Dagonet danced away.  
But through the slowly-mellowing avenues  
And solitary passes of the wood  
Rode Tristram toward Lyonesse and the west.

Then pressing day by day through Lyonesse  
Last in a rocky hollow, belling, heard  
The hounds of Mark, and felt the goodly hounds  
Yelp at his heart, but, turning, passed and gained  
Tintagil, half in sea, and high on land,  
A crown of towers.

Down in a casement sat,  
A low sea-sunset glorying round her hair  
And glossy-throated grace, Isolt the queen.  
And when she heard the feet of Tristram grind  
The spiring stone that scaled about her tower,  
Flushed, started, met him at the doors, and there  
Belted his body with her white embrace.

"Not so, my queen," he said, "but the red fruit  
Grown on a magic oak tree in midheaven,

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

And won by Tristram as a tourney prize,  
And hither brought by Tristram for his last  
Love offering and peace offering unto thee."

He spoke, he turned, then, flinging round her neck,  
Claspt it; . . . But while he bowed himself to lay  
Warm kisses in the hollow of her throat,  
Out of the dark, just as the lips had touched  
Behind him rose a shadow and a shriek—  
"Mark's way," said Mark, and clove him through  
the brain.

Tristram was a slave of the riot of his blood.  
There he lies in his own wine-drench of blood,  
a broken pitcher meant to be a man.

Sir Aylmer is the bigot of ancestry, a hard, narrow man whose heart is hard as age-old oak, who let his daughter die fading like a leaf for love, he dead in all impulses that a man should have. And this dull scion of silly aristocracy is crazy as old Lear; and all the maniac knows to say is "Desolation."

## II. THE WORKERS

The men who do things are named workers. What they do is not important. always enjoining on them that they do good. The working-man is the achiever. We do foolishly when we limit the term "workingman" to him of the pick or hoe. All such as toil at honorable toil are workingmen. The sailor, the miner, the poet, the publicist, the historian, the musician, the artisan of any kind, the navigator, the pioneer, the orator, the philanthropist, the builder of rail-

## TENNYSON'S MEN

roads, the digger of canals—all such are sweaty, honest workingmen. Tennyson himself was a workingman above most whom we take into our reckoning; and his workingmen have made our lives beautiful and created hunger for higher things. We dare not be parsimonious in our application of the brawny word “workingmen.” They make the world. All such as helped in this reshaping the destinies of men I name achievers. This cry of achievement is sounded in the poem with the title “Will”:

O well for him whose will is strong!  
He suffers, but he will not suffer long;  
He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong:  
For him nor moves the loud world's random mock  
Nor all Calamity's hugest waves confound,  
Who seems a promontory of rock,  
That, compassed round with turbulent sound,  
In middle ocean meets the surging shock,  
Tempest-buffeted, citadel-crowned.  
But ill for him who, bettering not with time,  
Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended Will  
And ever weaker grows through acted crime,  
Or seeming-genial venial fault,  
Recurring and suggesting still!  
He seems as one whose footsteps halt,  
Toiling in immeasurable sand,  
And o'er a weary, sultry land,  
Far beneath a blazing vault,  
Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill,  
The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

The negative of work is chanted in “The Lotos Eaters.” The air of balm and calm and slumber with the open eyes is all about them. They come upon a land

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

In which it seemed always afternoon.  
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,  
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.  
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;  
And, like a downward smoke, the slender stream  
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,  
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;  
And some like wavering lights and shadows broke,  
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.  
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow  
From the inner land: far off, three mountaintops,  
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,  
Stood sunset-flushed: and, dewed with showery drops,  
Up-climb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmèd sunset lingered low adown  
In the red West; through mountain clefts the dale  
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down  
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale  
And meadow, set with slender galingale;  
A land where all things always seem'd the same!  
And round about the keel with faces pale,  
Dark faces pale against the rosy flame,  
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,  
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave  
To each, but whose did receive of them,  
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave  
Far, far away did seem to mourn and rave  
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,  
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;  
And deep-asleep he seemed, yet all awake,  
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,  
With half-shut eyes ever to seem  
Falling asleep in a half-dream!

## TENNYSON'S MEN

To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,  
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;  
To hear each other's whisper'd speech;  
Eating the Lotos day by day,  
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,  
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;  
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly  
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;  
To muse and brood and live again in memory,  
With those old faces of our infancy  
Heaped over with a mound of grass,  
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore  
Than labor in the deep midocean, wind and wave and oar;  
O rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

But such surcease from toil would mean the wrecking of the world. We are not on this earth to rest. We are here to work, to grow dead tired so that we fall asleep at our work. Heaven will give us room for resting through illimitable years. We dare not spend excess of time in resting in this sweaty world, for so soon the night comes when no man can work. The toilers are the masters of the world.

The grim king in "The Princess" is worthy of being looked at in the face. A grim determination of might marks him much the man.

But my good father thought a king a king;  
He cared not for the affections of the house;  
He held a scepter like a pedant's wand  
To lash offense, and with long arms and hands  
Reached out and picked offenders from the mass  
For judgment.

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

Now, while they spake, I saw my father's face  
Grow long and troubled like a rising moon,  
Inflamed with wrath; he started on his feet,  
Tore the king's letter, snowed it down, and rent  
The wonder of the loom through warp and woof  
From skirt to skirt; and at the last he sware  
That he would send a hundred thousand men  
To bring her in a whirlwind.

Sir Walter is a man hale, ruddy, genial, and yet  
withal an outgrowth of the soil, quite wholesome,  
manly, strong.

And there we saw Sir Walter where he stood,  
Before a tower of crimson holly-oaks,  
Among six boys, head under head, and looked  
No little lily-handed baronet he,  
A great broad-shouldered, genial Englishman,  
A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,  
A raiser of huge melons and of pine,  
A patron of some thirty charities,  
A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,  
A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none;  
Fair-haired and redder than a windy morn.

The Duke of Wellington is sepulchered in noble gloom and glory in Tennyson's "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington." The ode is very noble. Put it with Pindar and Collins and with Keats and with Lowell's "Commemoration Ode" sanctified by its comprehension of Lincoln and with Walt Whitman's "My Captain." This characterization of the Iron Duke is as strong and surly as Lowell's characterization of Grant in his poem on that chief captain. Hear the dirge for the dead great Duke:

## TENNYSON'S MEN

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,  
Remembering all his greatness in the Past.  
No more in soldier fashion will he greet  
With lifted hand the gazer in the street.  
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute;  
Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,  
The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,  
Whole in himself, a common good.  
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,  
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,  
Our greatest yet with least pretense,  
Great in council and great in war,  
Foremost captain of his time,  
Rich in saving common-sense,  
And, as the greatest only are,  
In his simplicity sublime.  
O good gray head which all men knew,  
O voice from which their omens all men  
drew,  
O iron nerve to true occasion true,  
O fallen at length that tower of strength  
Which stood four-square to all the winds that  
blew!  
Such was he whom we deplore.  
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.  
The great world-victor's victor will be seen no  
more.

That phrasing, I think, sums up the man as no other words could do. He dwelt among the amazing soldiers of the world. He was the victor of Waterloo!

The soldiers of "The Charge of the Light Brigade" cannot be omitted. They heard the command; they answered it; they strewed the pitiful hill with corpse of horse and man. They were

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

Stormed at with shot and shell  
While horse and hero fell:  
They that had fought so well.

O the wild charge they made!  
All the world wonder'd.

They failed, but in failing achieved. You cannot defeat the hero soul.

“The Charge of the Heavy Brigade at Bal-  
aclava” thunders in our hearts. Those Scotch soldiers who knew no fear, but plunged on, man and horse, leader and led, among the hosts of foes to cut, slash, die, but grew afraid only of defeat. The gallant three hundred. The martial might of them thunders as reverberant tempests yet, yet, and yet forever.

“Victor Hugo” is

Weird Titan by thy winter weight of years  
As yet unbroken, Stormy voice of France!

“Montenegro” beats with eagles’ angry pinions,  
They rose to where their sovran eagle sails,  
They kept their faith, their freedom, on the height,  
Chaste, frugal, savage, armed by day and night  
Against the Turk.

The followers of Maeldune were brawny folk, fierce, fitful, feverish, bellicose—but sail by the Isle of Silence and by the Isle of Shouting and the Isle of Flowers and the Isle of Fruits and the Isle of Fire and the Isle of Witches and the Isle of the Saint—but helped into manhood at last by the Isle of the Saint and found forgiveness and forgave him whom they sought to slay.

## TENNYSON'S MEN

The men of "The Defense of Lucknow" are men. The dying Lawrence with his last breath had given command, "Never surrender, I charge you, but every man die at his post." Death was storming about like a winter wind.

Death from their rifle-bullets, and death from their cannon-balls,  
Death in our innermost chamber, and death at our slight barricade,  
Death while we stood with the musket, and death while we stooped to the spade,  
Death to the dying, and wounds to the wounded, for often there fell  
Striking the hospital wall, crashing through it, their shot and their shell,  
Death—for their spies were among us, their marksmen were told of our best,  
So that the brute bullet broke through the brain that could think for the rest;  
Bullets would sing by our foreheads, and bullets would rain at our feet—

And so they died—but at their post. The stench of putrid death, horrors eating at the heart, they fought through. They stayed, they fought, and they prevailed. "Hold it for fifteen days! We have held it for eighty-seven." They are saved by their valor and the blessing of God.

"Harold" is berserker in the fight. A hundred valors dash from his sword. He knows not danger's name.

Our axes lighten with a single flash  
About the summit of the hill, and heads  
And arms are sliver'd off and splinter'd by  
Their lightning—and they fly—the Norman flies.

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

And himself shames them all.

Yes, yea, for how their lances snap and shiver  
Against the shifting blaze of Harold's ax!  
War-woodman of old Woden, how he fells  
The mortal copse of faces! There! And there!  
The horse and horseman cannot meet the shield.  
The blow that brains the horseman cleaves the horse,  
The horse and horseman roll along the hill.

As Malet said, "King or not, hath kingly fought and fallen." And William the Conqueror gave testimony of his might:

"Three horses had I slain beneath me: twice  
I thought that all was lost. Since I knew battle,  
And that was from my boyhood, never yet—  
No, by the splendor of God—have I fought men  
Like Harold and his brethren, and his guard  
Of English. Every man about his king  
Fell where he stood. They loved him."

Gareth is achiever. He was a servant in the king's kitchen, yet a knight. He thought service needing doing, and nobly done, reputable. When Lynette made claim of help at Arthur's Court Gareth was given her for a knight. She despised him; but he knew himself, fought her battles, slew her foes, answered not her speech save with his sword. There was no honor but service; and service seemed to him the gauge of manhood. He was right. We feel him now the man he was.

"Becket" portrays a spirit born for rule. Henry II says:

"The army's might  
Is Becket's. He hath beaten down my foes."

## TENNYSON'S MEN

Becket's voice says:

"Sire, the business  
Of the whole kingdom waits me. Let me go."

Queen Eleanor calls him

"As brave a soldier as Henry  
And a goodlier man."

And Fitzurse's reply is,

"He helped the king break down our castles,  
For which I hate him."

He speaks to a noble as if he were a churl and to a churl as if he were a noble. He knew not fear. He held against the king and kept the house of Canterbury against the realm. He was careless if he died. His weaknesses were many, but himself was much the man. He was worth a whole house of kings. His massive will makes him masterful. So he stands living; so he lies dead. Foliet called him "a mitered Hercules." His fight with Henry is something good to hear and see.

King Henry is a man of rugged might, fierce, lawless, unmastered of himself, lewd, passionate, fitful, yet huge of fist and fierce of sword, and we feel that, bad as he was, he left a better realm than he received. He, ruthless, stayed the ruthless might of dangers manifold. Wicked he was, but strong, and must be set down among the masterful characters who wore the name of king.

With Ulysses we might tarry long. He never wearies us. Sloth worries him.

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

It little profits that an idle king,  
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,  
Matched with an aged wife, I mete and dole  
Unequal laws unto a savage race  
That board, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.  
I cannot rest from travel: I will drink  
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoyed  
Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those  
That loved me and alone; on shore, and when  
Through scudding drifts the rainy Hyades  
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name.

He is then and now

Strong in will  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

We see sweat stand out upon his forehead mixed  
with drench of sea wave; and his arms are thawed  
like the arms of the great Anakim. He pricks us  
with a spear to leap from sloth to neverending toil.

### III. THE LOVERS

Tennyson makes much of love. His poetry is sunny with it; and I love him for it. For love is so blessed, and is not only the essence of God, but also the essence of every good man's and every good woman's life. Had Love and he not been kinsmen, Tennyson could not have been laureate for England and the Anglo-Saxon race; for the Anglo-Saxon is a lover. In the long ago, when Tacitus, in his "Agricola," takes measure of the German tribes fronting the Northern Sea, he puts practically foremost in his estimate the regard in which women were held by these bar-

## TENNYSON'S MEN

barians. And Anglo-Saxondom, outgrowth of these long-since barbarians, has kept this fealty to womanhood and improved upon it until, by the blessing of Christ and his gospel, which has preempted the Anglo-Saxon character, its manly love and domesticity have come to be preeminent characteristics of this preeminent race of the present day of the world. Tennyson himself was much the lover. His love for his friend Arthur Hallam eventuated in a poem of sorrow and of hope such as literature knows of not another. Whatever deductions may be made from "*In Memoriam*," the fact will hold it to be a precious exhibition of the love of a capacious heart. And Tennyson's love for his wife and children is as sweet as any poetry his hand ever penned. Out of these things have grown the multi-colored flowers of human passion with which his poetry abounds; and as a body reads the bulk of his poetry it will prove really a revelation to observe how continuously love either laughs aloud or sobs aloud in his abundant verse. In "*The Day Dream*," betwixt the prince and the princess is the human heart-argument put so that it can never be eluded or defied. So long as men and women live, so long will men and women love. In Tennyson's "*Idylls of the King*" just one thing in particular I miss, namely, children. Not a child romps along those halls at Camelot nor sings along the shaded ways among the forests primeval of that early kingdom. "*OEnone*,"

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

"Mariana," and hosts of poems besides show the perpetual gushing up of the love element in him.

Count Frederigo, in "The Falcon," makes us love him, since he does not guess at his sacrifice. And that is how love is—that is what love is.

Romney, in "Romney's Remorse," is love at failure. He is an artist who has deserted his wife through many years—indeed, the bulk of their common lifetime—because he had heard an artist's judgment that a man weighted with a wife could not become a great artist. And after having devoted a lifetime to his efforts, himself, deserted of his friends at last and all but reasonless, goes back to find his deserted wife loyal to him still; and this poem is the rush of scarifying self-castigation which his conduct deserved, and shows that not himself but his wife was truly artist. She was artist and picture both. He, neither. His sob dries in his throat.

O yes, I hope, or fancy that, perhaps,  
Human forgiveness touches heaven, and thence—  
For you forgive me, you are sure of that—  
Reflected, sends a light on the forgiven.

The lover, name unknown and unneeded, in "The Ballad of Oriana," by a chance arrow, meant for a foe, slew his love, who from the battlement was watching her lover in the fight, and, though no fault is on him, his loss is plainly more than he can bear. His sob comes from his heart:

## TENNYSON'S MEN

I cry aloud: none hear my cries,  
Oriana.

Thou comest between me and the skies,  
Oriana.

I feel the tears of blood arise  
Up from my heart unto my eyes,  
Oriana.

Within thy heart my arrow lies,  
Oriana.

When Norland winds pipe down the sea,  
Oriana,

I walk, I dare not think of thee,  
Oriana.

Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,  
I dare not die and come to thee,  
Oriana.

I hear the roaring of the sea,  
Oriana.

In "The Princess" three lovers have their way, Florian, Cyril, and the Prince, but their portraits need not be drawn save that of the Prince. To name them is enough. They loved and were loved. Let that suffice. The Prince is worthy to be seen, for, though a king-to-be, he truly loved and like a man. The portrait of himself is such it were better to let his laureate and ours do all the portrait-painting. The Prince, chief lover in "The Princess," is a study in loverhood which cannot fail to make us better who have studied him:

A Prince I was, blue-eyed, and fair in face,  
Of temper amorous as the first of May,  
With lengths of yellow ringlets like a girl,  
For on my cradle shone the Northern star.

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

And still I wore her picture on my heart,  
And one dark tress; and all around them both  
Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about their  
queen.

And when ambassadors are sent to claim the  
bride, she

Loved to live alone  
Among her women; certain, she would not wed.

At last,  
From hills that look'd across a land of hope,  
We dropt with evening on a rustic town  
Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve  
Close at the boundary of the liberties.

My heart so thick with passion and with woe.

And I that prated peace, when first I heard  
War-music, felt the blind wild beast of force,  
Whose home is in the sinews of a man,  
Stir in me as to strike.

And how he fought for love is here set down:

“Yea,” answered I, “for this wild breath of air,  
This flake of rainbow flying on the highest  
Foam of men’s deeds—this honor, if ye will.  
It needs must be for honor if at all:  
Since, what decision? if we fail, we fail,  
And if we win, we fail: she would not keep her compact.”

And how he did not fight in vain the conclusion  
of the beautiful medley tells.

Pelleas is not lover at its best, because love  
at its best keeps hope and heart; but he is lover  
still. Though he is lover and achiever and  
blunderer at the last, and lost, I have ranked him

## TENNYSON'S MEN

among lovers, for love was his empowerer and his doom:

And beholding him so strong, she thought  
That peradventure he will fight for me,  
And win the circlet.

And Pelleas looked  
Noble among the noble, for he dreamed  
His lady loved him, and he knew himself  
Loved of the King: and him his new-made knight  
Worshipt, whose lightest whisper moved him more  
Than all the ranged reasons of the world.

She spake; and at her will they couched their spears,  
Three against one:

And Pelleas overthrew them, one to three;  
And they rose up, and bound, and brought him in.

Pelleas said to his false love:

"I cannot bear to dream you so forsborn:  
I had liefer ye were worthy of my love  
Than to be loved again of you—farewell;  
And tho ye kill my hope, not yet my love,  
Vex not yourself: ye will not see me more."

But Pelleas, leaping up,  
Ran thro' the doors and vaulted on his horse  
And fled:

And on meeting one who asked his name,

"I have no name," he shouted; "a scourge am I,  
To lash the treasons of the Table Round."  
"Yea, but thy name?" "I have many names," he  
cried:

"I am wrath and shame and hate and evil fame,  
And like a poisonous wind I pass to blast  
And blaze the crime of Lancelot and the Queen."  
"First over me," said Lancelot, "shalt thou pass."

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

"Fight therefore," yelled the other, and either knight  
Drew back a space, and when they closed, at once  
The weary steed of Pelleas floundering flung  
His rider, who called out from the dark field,  
"Thou art false as Hell: slay me: I have no sword."  
Then Lancelot, "Yea, between thy lips—and sharp;  
But here will I disedge it by thy death."  
"Slay then," he shriek'd, "my will is to be slain."

Pelleas lost his faith, and so, in truth, his love was lost.

The lover in "Maud" is hysterical. Leave that to women, whose nerves are finer than men's and, so, easily put out of tune. He has a touch of madness on him. He talks about suicide. He rants so as to dissuade any sane woman from loving or wanting him. He is awry at the world in general, has scant real self-respect, leers at wealth, and is all and in all as dubious a specimen of a lover as can be well imagined. He feels his own pulse and is absorbingly selfish. He calls: "Come into the garden, Maud, while I wait here alone," though really as we see him it passes understanding why she should care to go to the garden—or any place else—to see him. He farms his sensations, thinking to awake her pity. Excuse us from this sorry study in the pathology of love.

Julian, in "The Last Supper," moves us as to a flood of tears. His love is volcanic and summer-like in one. He loves so that he knew renunciation, which is love come to noon. His beloved, wedded to another, he brings back from

## TENNYSON'S MEN

death to life, and then gives back the woman to her husband amid surprise which makes her husband dumb. Julian has such a royal stock of manhood in loverhood and loverhood in manhood as that when he sets out on his lonely journey we look after him with eyes misty as with mountain fogs, and his life reads like a dream of the poets. Edwin Morris knew what love was:

“Give?

Give all thou art,” he answered, and a light  
Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy cheek;  
“I would have hid her needle in my heart,  
To save her little finger from a scratch  
No deeper than the skin: my ears could hear  
Her lightest breath: her least remark was worth  
The experience of the wise. I went and came;  
Her voice fled always through the summer land;  
I spoke her name alone. Thrice-happy days!  
The flower of each, those moments when we met;  
The crown of all, we met to part no more.”

Eustace is told of in “The Gardener’s Daughter”; and his love caught his eyes’ vision and his fingers’ skill, as averred his brother painter:

“Tis not your work, but Love’s. Love, unperceived—  
A more ideal Artist he than all—  
Came, drew your pencil from you, made those eyes  
Darker than darkest pansies, and that hair  
More black than ashbuds in the front of March.”

And this brother painter, having met the Gardener’s Daughter, grows wondrous wise and thought life then begun.

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

Where was he,  
So blunt in memory, so old at heart,  
At such a distance from his youth in grief,  
That, having seen, forgot? The common mouth,  
So gross to express delight, in praise of her  
Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,  
And Beauty such a mistress of the world.

A crowd of hopes  
That sought to sow themselves like wingéd seeds,  
Born out of everything I heard and saw,  
Fluttered about my senses and my soul;  
And vague desires, like fitful blasts of balm  
To one that travels quickly, made the air  
Of Life delicious, and all kinds of thought  
That verged upon them sweeter than the dream  
Dreamed by a happy man when the dark East,  
Unseen, is brightening to his bridal morn.

He sees his heaven as all lovers must.

Half light, half shade,  
She stood, a sight to make an old man young.

I that whole day  
Saw her no more, altho' I lingered there  
Till every daisy slept, and Love's white star  
Beam'd thro' the thickened cedar in the dusk.

Love knows not time when lovers meet.

There sat we down upon a garden mound,  
Two mutually enfolded; Love, the third,  
Between us, in the circle of his arms  
Enwound us both; and over many a range  
Of waning lime the gray cathedral towers,  
Across a hazy glimmer of the west,  
Revealed their shining windows: from them clashed  
The bells; we listened; with the time we played.

She was his; and then all words were mute.

## TENNYSON'S MEN

Love with knit brows went by,  
And with a flying finger swept my lips,  
And spake, "Be wise: not easily forgiven  
Are those, who, setting wide the doors that bar  
The secret bridal chambers of the heart,  
Let in the day." Here, then, my words have end.

He has her picture when she is no more and hides it from the sight of all, save now and then some friend he loves above the others, saying to him as he lifts the veil:

My first, last love; the idol of my youth,  
The darling of my manhood, and alas!  
Now the most blessed memory of mine age.

What man in love has not feasted his eyes as in "The Miller's Daughter"?

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin;  
And, in the pauses of the wind,  
Sometimes I heard you sing within;  
Sometimes your shadow crossed the blind.  
At last you rose and moved the light,  
And the long shadow of the chair  
Flitted across into the night,  
And all the casement darkened there.

The morning is so sweet. Love grows more dear, not less, as days go by. He has his wife to sing:

Love that hath us in the net,  
Can he pass, and we forget?  
Many suns arise and set,  
Many a chance the years beget.  
Love the gift is Love the debt.

Even so.

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

Love is hurt with jar and fret.  
Love is made a vain regret.  
Eyes with idle tears are wet.  
Idle habit links us yet.  
What is love? for we forget:  
    Ah, no! no!

Look thro' mine eyes with thine. True wife,  
    Round my true heart thine arms entwine;

Memory and love are visions sweet:

Arise, and let us wander forth,  
    To yon old mill across the wolds;  
For look, the sunset, south and north,  
    Winds all the vale in rosy folds,  
And fires your narrow casement glass,  
    Touching the sullen pool below:  
On the chalk-hill the bearded grass  
    Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

The lover of "The Sisters" has memory and anguish and regret. He drinks love's rue and not love's wine.

Lord Ronald, of "Lady Clare," has the right ring. We take him for a man, and are not mistaken.

The "Lord of Burleigh" heartens us. He is in his condition noble, but as an artist he meets and loves the one woman of his choice, who for him rejoices to go whither he will. She feels so rich, but love is love to this man, noble though a nobleman. He marries to suit his heart. May such as he become more plentiful!

The son of "The Northern Farmer" has the right of it. His father is a piece of soggy wood. He says:

## TENNYSON'S MEN

"Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as bean a-talkin' o' thee;  
Thou's bean talkin' to muther, and she bean a tellin'  
it me.

Thou'll not marry for munny—thou's sweet upo' par-  
son's lass—

Noa—thou'll marry for luvv—an' we boath on us  
thinks tha an ass.

"Seea'd her todaay goa by—Saaint's daay—they was  
ringing the bells.

She's a beauty, thou thinks—and soa is scoors o'  
gells,

Them as 'as munny an' all—wot's a beauty?—the  
flower as blaws.

But proputty, proputty sticks, an' proputty, proputty  
graws."

Truly, that so dubious a specimen of a man could have a son who could be so sure enough a man is good to consider; and we hope the son of the Northern Farmer may redeem his father's name from the shame of the empty heart.

## IV. RELIGIOUS MEN

These Tennyson men have been written of in ascending series. The workers are engaging as a field when the corn is ripe and the huskers are mid-most in the husking. Lovers are blessed as the odors of wild grapes in bloom joined to the excellency of the clustered fruit. Religious men are those for whom the world was built and for whom the heavens are property. They are those who are trying to be like God. As God is King of heaven, even so the religious man

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

is king in the world. He has the air of the commander. He controls the dispensations of mankind. Jesus said of good men, "Ye are the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world." He weighed his words and they need not to be retracted. Age on age bears testimony to their accuracy. As earth cannot keep house without light, nor can keep housekeeping without salt, so history is a paralytic without goodness. Good men are a necessity beyond anything we can name, and are the real riches of human kind, and therefore we cannot value them too highly as an asset of history. God knows: and he persists in thinking good men the necessities of the world and its saviours from destruction. When, therefore, religious men are placed as the June flower of manhood, we are classifying discreetly, God being the Judge. And we hold his judgments to be true and righteous altogether, and if this trampling host of Tennyson men is his religious host, then—ready! Let them march.

Of "Sir John Oldcastle" we may say a man speaks in this musing monody:

For I am emptier than a friar's brains;  
But God is with me in this wilderness,  
These wet black passes and foam-churning chasms—  
And God's free air, and hope of better things.

I would I knew their speech, not to glean—  
Not now—I hope to do it—some scattered ears,  
Some ears for Christ in this wild field of Wales—

## TENNYSON'S MEN

So, caught, I burn.

Burn? Heathen men have borne as much as this  
For freedom, or the sake of those they loved,  
Or some less cause, some cause far less than mine;  
For every other cause is less than mine.  
The moth will singe her wings, and, singed, return,  
Her love of light quenching her fear of pain—  
How now, my soul, we do not heed the fire?  
Faint-hearted? tut! faint-stomach'd! faint as I am,  
God willing, I will burn for him.

My friends await me yonder? Yes.  
Lead on then. *Up* the mountain? Is it far?  
Not far. Climb first and reach me down thy hand.  
I am not like to die for lack of bread,  
For I must live to testify by fire.

Among the manly men whom Tennyson has delighted to honor let us not forget to list the name of the king's fool, who, whoever else was false to Arthur, himself was true, and who has all the fealty of the fool in "Lear" with none of that fool's bitterness. The words of Arthur's fool are perfumed with cleanliness or are drenched with tears.

Columbus, in the poem of that name, I class among religious men rather than among workers, because the phase of his character the poet handles here is a Christian phase. Columbus had come from the world he discovered, brought home in chains, and is forsaken and poor in his forlorn apartment where once kings had been glad to come. There the poet finds him. The visit recalls the discoverer's past to his memory. He is not braggart, but retails his story. He is

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

self-respecting, religious, and of gloomy sorrow. He knows he did a man's day of work. Kings cannot dismantle him of service. So he looks at the chains swinging at his bed's head as trophies of his sorrow, and takes retrospect to see how they were earned:

Chains, my good lord: in your raised brows I read  
Some wonder at our chamber ornaments.  
We brought this iron from our isles of gold.

Chains for the Admiral of the Ocean! chains  
For him who gave a new heaven, a new earth,  
As holy John had prophesied of me,  
Gave glory and more empire to the kings  
Of Spain than all their battles! chains for him  
Who pushed his prows into the setting sun,  
And made West East, and sailed the Dragon's mouth,  
And came upon the Mountain of the World,  
And saw the rivers roll from Paradise!

Chains! we are admirals of the Ocean, we,  
We and our sons forever.

His voice lifts as he pronounces: "I have accomplished what I came to do." He dreamed a dream, but once again he had voyage,

And I saw

The glory of the Lord flash up, and beat  
Through all the homely town from jasper, sapphire,  
Chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius,  
Chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase,  
Jacinth and amethyst—and those twelve gates,  
Pearl—and I woke, and thought—death—I shall die—  
I am written in the Lamb's own Book of Life,  
To walk within the glory of the Lord.

He knows that in his life once

## TENNYSON'S MEN

*There was a glimmering of God's hand.*

And God

Hath more than glimmered on me.

And more than once in days

Of doubt and cloud and storm, when drowning hope  
Sank all but out of sight, I heard his voice:

"Be not cast down. I lead thee by the hand,  
Fear not." And I shall hear his voice again—  
I know that he has led me all my life,  
I am not yet too old to work his will—  
His voice again.

He lifts eyes upon his chains.

You see that I have hung them by my bed,  
And I will have them buried in my grave.

And characterizes himself as one

Whose life has been no play with him and his  
Hidalgos—shipwrecks, famines, fevers, fights,  
Mutinies, treacheries.

Undaunted and Undauntable by unknown seas,  
by mutinous men, by unjust imprisonment, by  
poverty, neglect, derision, Columbus abides,  
Columbus, high admiral of the seas!

Sir Richard Grenville of "The Revenge" is achiever too, whom I have placed among the religious men because in this poem his character stands out like sea cliffs seen through storm. Lord Howard with a fleet of six ships of the line has sighted fifty-three ships of the Spanish fleet and, declaring himself no coward, declares he must flee because his ships are out of gear and half of his men are sick. Sir Richard replies that

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

ninety men or more of his lie sick ashore, and that himself would be coward did he desert them to "the devildom of Spain." Lord Howard sails away, and Sir Richard Grenville puts on board his little ship his ninety wounded men "Very carefully and slow," and "laid them on the ballast down below." He had only a hundred seamen to work the ship and to fight. But with them he fought the fleet of Spain.

And the sun went down, and the stars came out far over the summer sea,  
But never a moment ceased the fight of the one and fifty-three.

Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built galleons came,  
Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her battle-thunder and flame;

For some were sunk and many were shattered, and so could fight us no more—  
God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the world before?

Sir Richard is undismayed.

For he said, "Fight on! fight on!"  
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck;  
And it chanced that, when half of the short summer night was gone,  
With a grisly wound to be drest he had left the deck,  
But a bullet struck him that was dressing it suddenly dead,  
And himself he was wounded again in the side and the head,  
And he said, "Fight on! fight on!"

And Sir Richard, seeing,

## TENNYSON'S MEN

Forty of our poor hundred were slain,  
And half of the rest of us maimed for life  
In the crash of the cannonades and the desperate strife;  
And the sick men down in the hold were most of them  
stark and cold,  
And the pikes were all broken or bent, and the powder  
was all of it spent;  
And the masts and the rigging were lying over the side.

Then he cried:

"We have fought such a fight for a day and a night  
As may never be fought again!  
We have won great glory, my men!  
And a day less or more  
At sea or ashore,  
We die—does it matter when?"

This man has learned much, for he rose up on  
their decks and cried:

"I have fought for my Queen and faith like a valiant  
man and true;  
I have only done my duty as a man is bound to do;  
With a joyful spirit I, Sir Richard Grenville, die!"  
And he fell upon their decks and he died.

This man has lit his lamp at some celestial fire.

Sir Galahad has the

. . . . strength of ten  
Because his heart is pure.

He has the manliness of purity. He has learned  
his religion of God. He keeps his heart with all  
diligence, knowing that out of it are the issues  
of life.

The clouds are broken in the sky  
And thro' the mountain walls  
A rolling organ-harmony  
Swell's up, and shakes and falls.

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

Then move the trees, the copses nod,  
Wings flutter, voices hover clear;  
“O just and faithful knight of God!  
Ride on! the prize is near.”  
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;  
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,  
All-armed I ride, whate'er betide,  
Until I find the Holy Grail.

The clerk in the poem “Sea Dreams” may find his place among religious men because he forgave. His enemy has ruined him, but he mustered up his weak strength and does the act which has been learned of God. Forgiveness of enemies is robust Christianity.

Saint Simeon Stylites has half-way view conceptions of religion, but he has religion. Had he seen the better way of serving men, by working with them and for them, he had been as indefatigable as Paul or Wesley. But to him religion is self-inflicted suffering. He thinks religion is the art of getting self saved. It is a pity that with so large a grip upon the essence of religion, which is getting self saved to the end of saving others, that he is “Battering the gates of heaven with the storms of prayer.” Thrice ten years he lived on his pillar, “A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud.” He has the right view of sin. He sees it in all its shame. Hear his voice: “Have mercy, mercy! cover all my sin.” While devils swarm he says, “I smote them with the cross.” There is much manhood upon the head of Saint Simeon Stylites.

## TENNYSON'S MEN

Of King Arthur I have written at length in another place. So for him in this place this word: In wooing, in marriage, in battles manifold, in palace, on throne, among his knights, against the heathen hordes, in conquest and defeat, girt round by adulation or bereft of friends save one; when love lit his palace as tabernacle light, or when, his wife all false, he lifts his eyes to see the palace dark, and stands under the falling rain ready to ride into that battle from which he shall be borne to die—in all he wore the white flower of a blameless life. Religion was his life. In his character he is all a king. And so he nor his kingdom ever falls into decay.

Among Tennyson's religious men Tennyson must have his place. Out of his simple manliness of heart he drew as from a living well this manly company. They are his heart's desire and his heart's offspring. Only to the pure heart were such pure men indigenous. It were a worthy task, if space allowed, to take from all his poems such passages as are clearly revelational of the poet's self. "Merlin and the Gleam" is autobiographic. I feel Tennyson through every music-making line. He is Merlin following the gleam. In "In Memoriam" he is sounding the depths of the deep heart. Doubts struggling toward faith and kindling to a song, spirit which will not stop with graves, faith which will not end in doubt, are condensed in

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

“In Memoriam” and may be characterized as the battle in the open of a strong man to brave his way through pessimism to optimism. And the battle succeeded. In “The Deserted House” is sung the goal to which the moving of this brave poet brings him:

Come away: for Life and Thought  
Here no longer dwell;  
    But in a city glorious—  
A great and distant city—have bought  
    A mansion incorruptible.  
    Would they could have stayed with us!

Himself may stand the poet of “The Poet’s Song”:

The rain had fallen, the Poet arose,  
    He passed by the town and out of the street,  
A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,  
    And waves of shadow went over the wheat,  
And he sat him down in a lonely place,  
    And chanted a melody loud and sweet,  
That made the wild-swan pause in her cloud,  
    And the lark drop down at his feet.  
The swallow stopt as he hunted the bee,  
    The snake slipt under a spray,  
The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak,  
    And stared, with his foot on the prey,  
And the nightingale thought, “I have sung many songs,  
    But never a one so gay,  
For he sings of what the world will be  
    When the years have died away.”

His perception of the insufficiency of culture is greatly retained, dramatically retained, in “The Palace of Art.” The teaching of the poet is poured out in the concluding quatrain:

## TENNYSON'S MEN

Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are  
So lightly, beautifully built:  
Perchance I may return with others there  
When I have purged my guilt.

His sense of the immanence of God is read in  
Flower in the crannied wall,  
I pluck you out of the crannies  
If I understood you, root and all,  
I should know what God and man is.

His safe reliance on God in death or life is passed  
into song for all the coming Christian centuries.  
He called the poem "Crossing the Bar," and left  
command that to all time that song should stand  
as conclusion to his poems:

For though from out our bourne of Time and Place  
The flood may bear me far;  
I hope to meet my Pilot face to face  
When I have crossed the bar.

He died in the moonlight, restfully, with a  
volume of "Cymbeline," lying in his white hand on  
the coverlet; and the book was open at the song:

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,  
Nor the furious winter's rages;  
Thou thy worldly task hast done,  
Home art gone and ta'en thy wages:  
Golden lads and girls all must,  
As chimney sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' the great,  
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke:  
Care no more to clothe and eat;  
To thee the reed is as the oak:  
The scepter, learning, physic, must  
All follow this, and come to dust.

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

Fear no more the lightning-flash,  
Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;  
Fear not slander, censure rash;  
Thou hast finished joy and moan:  
All lovers young, all lovers must  
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

I conclude this essay on Tennyson's religious men with him who seems to me to sum up the very best and incarnate, the very divinest. This man is Enoch Arden. The poem says, "So passed that strong, heroic soul away." But therein is the poem wrong. Enoch Arden cannot pass away. He is an immortality.

He is shipwrecked on a lonely isle. There

Had not his poor heart  
Spoken with That which, being everywhere,  
Lets none who speaks with Him seem all alone,  
Surely the man had died of solitude.

He kept his love for Annie through the homesick years. Rescued at last, his speech was fettered like a bondsman's limbs. Shambling his words came back. His vessel doddered through the emerald seas, but at the last he comes to his old-time port, himself a wreck, to find his life a wreck, his wife wedded, his children forgetful of his life or death, and on Annie's breast a baby not his:

Because things seen are mightier than things heard,  
Staggered and shook, holding the branch, and feared  
To send abroad a shrill and terrible cry  
Which in one moment, like the blast of doom,  
Would shatter all the happiness of the hearth.

## TENNYSON'S MEN

He therefore, turning softly, like a thief,  
Lest the harsh shingle should grate underfoot,  
And feeling all along the garden-wall  
Lest he should swoon, and tumble, and be found,  
Crept to the gate, and opened it, and closed  
As lightly as a sick man's chamber door  
Behind him, and came out upon the waste.

And there he would have knelt but that his knees  
Were feeble, so that, falling prone, he dug  
His fingers into the wet earth and prayed.

"Too hard to bear! why did they take me thence?  
O God Almighty, blessed Saviour, thou  
That didst uphold me on my lonely isle,  
Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness  
A little longer! aid me, give me strength  
Not to tell her, never to let her know.  
Help me not to break in upon her peace."

There speech and thought and nature failed a little,  
And he lay tranced: but when he rose and paced  
Back toward his solitary home again,  
All down the narrow street he went,  
Beating it in upon his weary brain,  
As tho' it were the burthen of a song,  
"Not to tell her, never to let her know."

When sickness came on him:

Enoch bore his weakness cheerfully.  
For sure no gladlier does the stranded wreck  
See thro' the gray skirts of a lifting squall  
The boat that bears the hope of life approach  
To save the life despaired of, than he saw  
Death dawning on him, and the close of all.

He rehearsed to Miriam Lane:

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

He told her of his voyage,  
His wreck, his lonely life, his coming back,  
His gazing in on Annie, his resolve,  
And how he kept it,

which any heart not stone weeps at as Miriam Lane did as she heard it. To the last his thought is Annie:

“She must not come,  
For my dead face would vex her after life.”

He turns his face toward the life to come:

“And now there is but one of all my blood,  
Who will embrace me in the world-to-be:  
This hair is his: she cut it off and gave it;  
And I have borne it with me all these years,  
And thought to bear it with me to my grave;  
But now my mind is changed, for I shall see him,  
My babe, in bliss, wherefore when I am gone  
Take, give her this, for it may comfort her;  
It will moreover be a token to her that I am he.”

One night

There came so loud a calling of the sea,  
That all the houses in the haven rang.  
He woke, he rose, he spread his arms abroad,  
Crying with a loud voice, “A sail! a sail!  
I am saved!” and so fell back and spoke no more.

And in that fishing-cove upon the cliff a stranger lay dead, and on his face a rest, the calm of God. And in the coming triumph of those who have come up through great tribulation in soldiership for God, bearing their scars, be sure this sweet, strong Enoch Arden will appear.

# V

## ON READING BEAUTIFUL BOOKS

THE talk here had is about books beautifully printed and bound. Any book of beautiful thoughts is a joy, however dight. No binding is sometimes an accession. For instance, I have a Life of General George H. Thomas in sheets. How I came by it is another story. But I have come by it, and he shall be a laddie who shall dispossess me of these same sheets. About General Thomas was an aloofness, a remoteness, a lonely eminence which touches like a defeat in battle. The Rock of Chickamauga was this stolid, slow man, who in the battle of Nashville played whirlwind and swept a whole army into chaff. Howbeit, that whirlwind caught not the popular plaudit, as seems to us it ought, and to the General himself so seemed, so that to the end of his chapter he was an uninterpreted man, and disappointed in part or in whole; hence this incomplete volume of mine has in it a measure of recognition of the battle man whose story is therein writ, set down in terms of pulsing laudation.

What should a body care how ragged and seamy-scurvy the brochure in which he found

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

printed the story of "The Other Wise Man," or "Rab and His Friends," or Thackeray's bitter yet tender but always tremendous "The Four Georges," or Oliver Goldsmith's delicious and cleansing comedy, "She Stoops to Conquer," or that dashing piece of bloodthirstiness and heroism, "The Prisoner of Zenda"? One would not think of print and covers. The thing was enough. Howbeit, these self-same books, were they garmented in lovely apparel and print, would give their robes regality, and the robes would impress us as fitting. Some books are seemliest in tatters. For instance, I have a collection of Eliana, not large enough to boast of but ample enough to rejoice a lover of Elia. Works of him—and works of him I have on and on. Some are bound in paper, some printed this side and some that side of the Atlantic, which was a space of doom to unseagoing Elia. Some are bound just enough to call them bound; some bound by famed binders and in loveliness which had caused my Lord Grolier to smile a smile of deep content and write upon the fly leaf what was reiteratedly printed on his books—"For Jean Grolier and his Friends."

And in all bindings they read well. Democratic and undemocratic, they pass on, the coins of a perpetual mint from the nervous fingers of aristocratic, democratic Elia. If I were to light on "The Newcomes" anywhere in tatters of paper wrapped about some discarded crockery, would

## ON READING BEAUTIFUL BOOKS

not my night trim its lamp till day the while  
I read the book, and would not the month be  
June though gusty January swaggered along the  
world as owning it?

In my library is a copy of "Bleak House" in the original parts in blue wrappers, and no living binder—Cockerell, or Mathews, or Cobden Sanderson—though he came from his retirement as ex-binder and did me the honor to bind my books, not he nor any of those anonymous binders who bound Jean Grolier's volumes for him, should bind these nineteen blue pamphlets for me. As they are I love them. Blue pamphlets with advertisements, and tied together with a faded ribbon, so they stay with me beside a first edition of "David Copperfield" and "Pickwick Papers" and John Forster's all but inimitable "Life of Charles Dickens." As they are they ought to be, and shall be while this book lover owns these books and sits with unacclaimed delight and looks at them and looks and looks. Selah!

Yet having said these things regarding the delight of books however contrived, and said them quite truthfully, it remains true that beautifully conditioned books have their thrall. A lovely book is like a precious stone cut into a cameo—beauty to beauty added. Since the calligraphy of the scribal artist who pored over his vellum and decorated it with angel and flower and bird and flame, it has been that men

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

have loved the book beautiful, and Philobiblion Richard de Bury has had a host and will have a hostier host more of followers, fellow adulators. We are not guilty of vagary when we linger over a book which is a thing of beauty and a joy forever. We are not on the wrong track, but decidedly on the right track when we do so.

A book of beauty put into print—page, body adequate and fit—makes a thing which to possess, read, dream over, caress with the eyes is luxury.

And, happily, it has come to pass that at no wild excess of price these luxuries may be had. The prices are not prohibitive, even to the lean purse of a preacher. In particular is this true if a body be a buyer at book auctions as this writer has been twenty years, and is and shall so stay what time God lets him stay in earthly libraries and a lover of what they hold. A constant peruser of catalogues of every great book auction house in America and of old book dealers' announcements from Europe, he has found that the crumbs from the rich man's tables have enabled him to be a Lazarus whose poverty has grown to riches. Because when a library is tabulated as, "The Private Library of the Late—," then come I, a blithsome Lazarus, and hobble close to the rich man's table and make free with the crumbs, as if I were an English sparrow, till at last, by and by, unbidden guest at many a late rich man's table, my crumbs accumulate into a loaf. Meantime I have eyed each crumb

## ON READING BEAUTIFUL BOOKS

and enjoyed each crumb. *Enjoy* is the word. For the time a crumb was enough, and a loaf had been needless excess, seeing one cannot eat a loaf at an eating. Why be porkine with edibles? O the fun of being poor and having a little at a time! To illustrate: Robert Hoe's library, that pride to all who care for such things and know about them because Robert Hoe, inventor of the Hoe Press, who so came by his wealth by the good graces of the type, became the princeliest buyer of books this world has known. How Richard de Bury would have loved him! (And how good that is to say of an American, and how proud am I, an American, to say it!) Hoe's library was sold for about two millions of dollars, or more than four times the price of the costliest library hitherto dispersed—to instance the Ashburnam Library, which brought four hundred and fifty thousand dollars. From that Robert Hoe Library, whose vellum copy of the Gutenberg Bible fetched fifty thousand dollars—the top price ever paid for a book—from that library, where prices were asserted to be exorbitant, and where I, Lazarus William A. Quayle, thought it bootless to bid much as being a book-buying impertinence, I secured a vellum-bound copy of the Riverside Press edition of two volumes of "The Marble Faun," with the Robert Hoe book plate therein (for abundant measure) and at a price so low that I, though a bibelot Lazarus, am too purse-

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

proud to mention. The poorest may buy a few beautiful books and be never the poorer but much the richer.

What an inexpensive luxury this same "The Marble Faun" is! and obligated should America feel to the Houghton Mifflin Company, owners of the Riverside Press, for the exquisite pieces of printery they send forth from time to time. What an artistic satisfaction is their "The Fair God," or their Howells "Venetian Days" (of which I am happy though humble possesser of a vellum-paged and bound copy), vellum leaf and vellum binding and brightened by a series of water-color illustrations witching as Venice on the sea. Or there is their two-volume "Cape Cod," with Thoreau footing it around the windy, sand-drifting cape, which (I mean the book) is elucidated by water-color pictures of things seen and said on the journey in the book, and all executed so daintily as to fill a body with content to hold it open in the hands and dream and listen for the breaking surf that surges on those sandy wind-whipped shores. And this copy of mine is not the less alluring because it was a gift and as a token of love brings with it sunlight and spring weather.

As I write I hold in my hands the Riverside Press "The Life of Cardinal Wolsey" written by George Cavendish and meseems (to use the introductory word of Cavendish), that the Kelmscott Press copy of the same work is not so de-

## ON READING BEAUTIFUL BOOKS

sirable. It is more ornate but less satisfying. This remark may be taken with as many grains of salt as any reader may wish, seeing my Americanism is so vociferous as to make me a little lop-sided in my appreciations of everything cisatlantic and bearing the imprint "U. S. A." The quaint reading of Cavendish's notable biography, which after long neglect and strange vagabondage has come to be recognized as one of the noblest biographies ever written—this when put in this comely volume becomes more than doubly engaging and is as a rare gem set in wrought gold, cunningly done by the smith, a work beautiful.

In my library are books from most if not all the famous modern presses and I con them over with a light heart. Ballantyne Press, Vale Press, Riverside Press, Chiswick Press, Elston Press, Ash-endene Press, Caradoc Press, Mosher Press, Cleveland Press, Tomoye Press, Kelmscott Press, Doves Press, The Abbey Press, The De Vinne Press, Grolier Press, Daniel Press, Lee Priory Press, Vincent Press, Baskerville Press, Foulis Press, Ben Franklin's Press, Strawberry Hill Press, Merrymount Press, The Knickerbocker Press, Temple Press, The Wayside Press, Cranbrook Press, The Abingdon Press, Turnbull and Sears, Club of Odd Volumes, and then when I wish to grow haughty I recall that I am possessor of a William Morris copy of Wynken de Worde's "Flouer of the Commandments of God."

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

And what joy without alloy have I had in fumbling over these pages—not reading but fumbling, and sometimes reading and fumbling, yet in any wise fumbling. No haste is permissible when a fair page is before the eyes and a fair story before the heart.

I have three settings of the book of Job, each being noble and all being rugged like an oak in a storm. One is that weird production, William Blake's illustrations, quite the sublimest rendering in interpretation which this great poem drama has ever had. How the wonder of the poem deepens on the soul as seen through the poet's eyes when that poet has turned painter! Sublimity has found interpreter when William Blake contrives to picture God. The second is from the Abbey Press—pure white of page and vellum cover, and simple but worthy black type and pictured in black. How the stately periods of this stupendous drama resound when seen on this perfect page! The third is from the press of Turnbull and Sears. The illustrations are by Granvell Fell and are done in colors and fail not in being companionable in worthy dignity to the poem they attempt to explicate. The binding is chaste and modest, and all the book stimulates satisfaction. I have read Job from a tattered Bible in the cornfield, and there where the sky was blue and the wind strong and the leaves crumpled in the wind's fingers, the holy and high word was sweet and wonder-lit, but these books wherein

## ON READING BEAUTIFUL BOOKS

artistry of pencil, type, bindery, are tinctured together give one peace.

My Ashendene Press Dante, in three volumes, hand-made paper and hand-illuminated initials, printed in Italian which the brave and saturnine Dante himself had accorded the grace of a smile had he seen it, is putting poetry to music. I care to fondle the books as if the words could make my hands odorous as if wind from a clover field blew over them. And "The Vicar of Wakefield" from the Caradoc Press, how good to have and to hold from this day forward! Whenever have I not loved to handle "The Vicar of Wakefield"? To be near that sweet book and not have heart-beat is beyond me. Though Mark Twain loved it not but loathed it, what is that to me? I stand in my own right of love and laudation. But this book sets my pulse going lively. I want not to put the book down, though I read it not. I dawdle over it and am refreshed. Another "Vicar of Wakefield" I have in French, a tongue in which I am not expert, but in which I can on a pinch order raisins and a mutton chop—which really is enough of a foreign tongue. Those who have so worthy a tongue as Americans, can be neglectful of the languages of others, resting content with the mighty speech which has come to them through brooding centuries when a language was in the making, a language fit for freemen with Magna Chartas and Declarations of Rights, and Declarations of

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

Independence. But this French “Vicar of Wakefield,” while the print is in French, the pictures are in English and are artistic masteries of interpretation and color, and do shine the gentle vicar’s virtues out in a gentle light like the light of stars. And Spenser’s “Faerie Queene,” printed for the Chiswick Press at Ruskin House and illustrated by Walter Crane, whose “Recollections” I am at this moment reading. But if ever a poem needed nothing to make it picturesque and satisfying, that poem is “The Faerie Queene;” but now that it is set out in the sunlight in this noble fashion and, with an artist spirit for interpreter, is bent on making loveliness more lovely, I lean over it and drink it as I have drunk the dew from the heather’s lips on the cliffs of Manxland as they stand stalwart looking on the sea. Another edition of this book I have done in illustrations by Fairfax Muckley and bound in vellucent vellum with hand paintings on the vellum binding by Chivers of Bath. You cannot make “The Faerie Queene” too beautiful. It outbeauties all about it. And this Kelmscott, this particular one, though there are a number in this library; but this, “The Wood Beyond the World,” by William Morris, does me good like a walk along a quiet river. Of course Kelmscott does me good, the very thought of it, for Morris stood for so much I honor in my heart and so much too which I deeply disbelieve; but he loved the beautiful and yearned to make it

## ON READING BEAUTIFUL BOOKS

prevalent and popular. And he did both in a measure, and the end is not yet. But the book spun from his brain with that love inherent in him of mediævalism and his romanticism harking backward, ever backward, as if romance were of yesterday and his quaint language learned of Malory of the “*Morte d’Arthur*” and here roaming like a wandering light, and the type he cut and the book he planned for beauty and the plan worked out in this book now lying before me.

And here is Spenser’s “Epithalium” done on parchment and hand-illuminated and lettered in blue and gold; and another book done on vellum and illuminated in carmine, blue, and gold is Wordsworth’s “Ode to Immortality;” or this “The Flower and the Leaf,” by Geoffrey Chaucer, done in parchment with illuminations manifold. These things are as they ought to be. Their loveliness increases. What poets have chastely said must by other poets be chastely pictured, set, and bound. A beautiful book is a poem.

And now here is “Pilgrim’s Progress” (both parts), published by “George Newnes, Lt’d,” illustrated by Edmund J. Sullivan and done on Japanese vellum, only twenty-five copies printed, of which this is number “seven” and signed by Edmund J. Sullivan. Of the many editions of the immortal “Progress” of the immortal “Pilgrim” in this library no one charms me as this volume. My Chiswick Press Bunyan is

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

beautifully done, and on hand-made paper, but contains only "Part I" of the *Progress*, which should never happen, for, to say nothing further, Part II has the speech of Mr. Standfast in the River, which I should set down as, all told, the sweetest piece of prose in the English language. Many of my copies of *Pilgrim's Progress* are copiously and admirably illustrated, and withal nobly, yet does this chaste setting please me above all. I shall seek no further for editions of this transcendent allegory. My eyes and hands and acquisitiveness shall now rest content. Besides—and a big besides—this volume is bound by Cedric Chivers, of Bath, and in a quiet gray-brown levant—the exact color I have seen on a moth's wing—and is inlaid in a quaint and insinuating fashion alluring to the eyes and has toolings very chaste and beautiful. Both color and artistry rest the spirit like a brown landscape of cornfields seen in autumnal afternoons of gray sky, where not one window opens through the settled cloud into the ultimate blue. On the front of the binding is a picture of Pilgrim with his heavy burden leaning heavy on his shoulders and a heart of mother-of-pearl just above his weary head, bent in reading the book, which shall suddenly give light whereby the load shall roll away before the cross; and the heart is pointed upward. This picture is painted on vellucent parchment in gentle blues and gentle browns and gentle reds, while below is a mother-

## ON READING BEAUTIFUL BOOKS

of-pearl heart pointing downward. Many bindings have I seen from many binders, though never a Grolier nor a Maioli which possessed the spirituality and loveliness of this quiet and dear book. Without and within it has right to be named a delight.

Nor can I omit in such a catalogue my own little book, "The Song of Songs," which now lies under my eyes and at the touch of my fingers. This treasure is printed on pure vellum by Eaton & Mains on a page of my own shaping and in type of my own choosing: Cheltenham with long hafts for "fs" and "hs" and "ls"; page size and length adapted to size and shape of types. No chaster piece of printing has come from any American or foreign press than this little "Song of Songs," and I speak advisedly as being informed on what I say. The pages have the paragraph letter omitted after the manner of the earliest printed books and an illuminator has inserted curious and lovely letters throughout the volume and enriched it with floriations and ornamentations in every color from gold to shimmer of silk sheen luster, and has let the trailing vines of color blossom out into sudden and heartening flower. From title page to colophon each page has its scribal and unduplicated handiwork, and very beautiful is it to look upon. This illumination, done in Chicago, is much superior to the mass of scribal work in this library done by foreign scribes; the floria-

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

tion much more accurate and vinelike and in the proper manner of the pre-printing scribal artists; and to me it is a real joy to have America prove preeminent in this gentle art. The book is bound by the Monastery Hill Bindery. The binding, too, is of my own designing, so that the book within and without in sentiment and form is mine and gives the thrill of creation on its every page. The binding is royal purple (the murex shell spilled his lifeblood to the last drop on this levant) and front and back have superimposed silver, done by the silversmith at my direction, in scroll work of silver, which flashes out into silver flowers like a wind-flower's white, and the clasps are flowers at bloom in perpetual silver. If I grow a trifle conceited over the amenities of this book beautiful, I am confident any bibliophile will pass my imperfection by. It is not egotism; it is affection.

In this library is a royal volume, using that term in its economical sense. It is the "Prayer Book of Edward VII." To be sure, that king had nothing to do with this notable volume. Kings seldom have any leadership in doing things that are fine and generous. Somebody else does the fine things and tacks a king's name on to the tag. The only point involved is that at the time of the printing of this engaging volume the almanac asserted that Edward VII was on the throne. He could not help it; neither

## ON READING BEAUTIFUL BOOKS

could the people. The like was true of that line of historical prayer books from the days of Edward VI to now. This is the *chef d'oeuvre* of the Chiswick Press; and they may well rest their laurels on so stately a book. Those laurels will refuse to wither. The paper is Japanese vellum, type and initial letters designed by Ellis, and the cost at publication was one hundred dollars, and was worth it and more. Thanks to the book auction, with what joy I became economical possessor of this expensive book of prayer, and thought myself happy to have it, as it was printed with stately figures of archbishops and kings and Milton—and Wesley, though just how such unworthy worthies crowded their worthy way into a prayer book of the Church of England, I, uninitiated, could scarcely surmise. Yet there they were; and I waded through the holy and noble book as I have done through rushing surf, elate as June. The volume of my first acquisition was bound in purple and was noble folio in dimensions, so the impression made was very noble. How I swaggered with this book on my library table in the view of the multitude! Pride might have had a fall from me at any time, but Providence was kind as designing to be indulgent to a humble minister who so very seldom has any conceivable ground for any kind of pride, however modest. What shall measure my fortune when, not long since, through the happy medium of my friendly friend,

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

the Book Auction, there should happen to happy me another volume of the same book, only with binding of intricate inlay work and rich and various gold toolings which gave a sense of lavishness like the riot of golden flowers along an autumn ravine—elaborate and noble inlay. AND (let that “and” stand tall and visible; so it belongs) every initial letter and every figure throughout the entirety of the book (and in the Psalter the letters and figures were past the hundreds) illuminated with intricacy and skilled painstaking till each figure became a work of real art to remind me of a copy of the famous Plantin Press, where the pictures are hand-colored and wonderful. This artist clearly had gladness in the work. And the binding throughout is in keeping with the lavish beauty of the volume’s self. Purple, as has been said, inlaid with lilies and fuchsia bells and crimson roses, a very riot of flowers and color, and the dentelle work varied and lovely, while the doublure is crimson levant with an inlaid cross of black, but overgrown with a vine—“I am the Vine”—with leaves of inlay green as spring and golden clusters of grapes hanging from the black arms of the cross on which the Christ, for us, was glad to die.

And that high tide of *Samson Agonistes* becomes beyond itself impressive when Samson lies dead, slain in his triumph over Israel’s enemy, and the Voice says—

## ON READING BEAUTIFUL BOOKS

“Samson hath quit himself  
Like Samson . . .  
Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail  
    Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,  
    Dispraise or blame, nothing but well and fair  
        And what may quiet us in a death so noble.”

—This, said on the page of a Baskerville’s “Milton,” makes melody more melodious and heightens this sublimity.

## VI

### A POET CHRYSOSTOM

NOT to be secretive, the poet intended is Francis Thompson. A twentieth-century man we might call him, since he dwelt so deep in the nineteenth as to have been in the very swirl of twentieth-century living. He seems a dweller in the age of Elizabeth and brother to those gorgeous singers who lipped the flute and from it dripped words with wings. An anachronism you might name Francis Thompson if you were stickler for the calendar, although such as keep close ear to the heart of the world's best things know that all days are June days to the witcheries of the world, and men are all the while as that great spirit who said of himself that he was as one born out of due season. All seasons are seasonable to the creative God; and we may well rejoice with wide rejoicing that in all climes the soil grows blossoms of rarest hue and perfume. The accident of time is not serious. The man who overleaps his century and comes into the middle meadow of the wonders of the eternal consequentials is your immortal. We must not wish to tie men down to their contemporaries. What is man that he should ever be hedged in by his

## A POET CHRYSOSTOM

century? Is he not by virtue of his immortality a citizen of all the centuries, and shall he be traitor to his eternity? Was Shakespeare son of England or the sixteenth century, or Milton son of the seventeenth century, or Burke son of the eighteenth century? Were they not transcendent men and spurners of barriers of time? And was Keats a nineteenth-century man? To name it is to deride it. He was son of the long ago, when the world was new and dream-swept and wondering, like little children searching the moonlights for the fairies' forms spinning in the gleam. He was fronted, so to say, backward, and had the flattened eyeball, so that the far seemed near and the near was invisible. Or in what deeper regard was Shelley either Englishman or eighteenth-century man? He was woven of shimmering moonlight as regards all those elements in him which make him immortal. His atheism goes for naught and his serious spirit of revolt falls away like a mist when we come to search for the nightingale that sings in those shadows which we name Shelley. No, contemporaneity is not a thing for emphasis for such as have the wings to overleap the centuries. We stay where we are born and put because we be lesser men. The last century is, in much, the noblest; but the centuries are larger than any century. The glory and the beauty of living now are that we lightly skim—as swallows do—across all the open water of

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

the centuries of the life-time of the world. A body need not be archaic because his thought runs hot in the mold of some distant day. He may be simply luminous and barrier-defying. He may be happy kinsman to all the days that are. He may eschew our grammar with its tenses and swim like morning in an eternal now. For me, it is ever good to light upon the soul not "cabined" nor "confined," the eclectic that goes where it will and asks no odds save of God, by whom it is and for whom it is. I love the innovation of the vital and the winged and the espouser of the eternal. Such is Francis Thompson.

And golden is the identificational word for Francis Thompson. Golden throat, golden mouth, golden speech—all these equally belong to him. His sun is golden, and blooms yellow like a sunflower in a golden sky. The much-burdened epithet "simplicity" has no relation to him, or his thought, or his dealings with the destinations of the soul. He did not know simplicity. He knew involvedness; remote conjunctions which to the very many appeared incongruous. Meanings which had not yet come to bloom swept over him like daisy fields at perfect flower. How readily we are duped by a phrase. We surrender to a word and remain abject menials. "Simplicity" is good for what it is good for, but so few things are dwellers in that land. The hated dandelion (howbeit I enroll myself among its

## A POET CHRYSOSTOM

lovers) is the completest flower, and we regard it as a weed! Why spill all odors but one? Why not let the many herbals have their chance and ambulatory where they may rightfully walk abroad? May we not be happy thus with simplicity and complexity? Why not? God is. May I not plant my feet where I see his shoe-prints? We become little because we live on a very narrow strip of land when we might inhabit a limitless landscape. The poet who calls out so that the slow-coming centuries have heard his jubilant voice, "I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord," had the philosophy of the matter so that it needed not to be revised. He took it all and enjoyed it all. Happy he and we who "follow in his train." To want the all, to be waiting for it, ready for it, jubilant in it, is life's secret and sunrise. The incondite poetry, like Burns's "The Daisy"—flower, dew, plow, plowman, sag of field—this is to be desired, but some far-sought splendor, like Spenser, that, too, is worth the quest. From sky to sky, from hill to hill again, from mountaintop to mountaintop, with all that lies between, this prince of the blood owns and treasures and pours from heart and brain; a quiet occupant of every inch of ground in this extending universe. Why flaunt the "far-flung battle line"? Why scorn far-fetched imagery? Those who have swift wings may bring from far as effortlessly as a beetle from a

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

neighboring leaf. Give souls room. Because we are cramped by lethargy or rheumatism, why compel all to share our incapacity? Better that they should be free for their quest and go far in their spaciousness of room. Better that the little should become kinsman of the large than that the large should forsake its sky and shear away its pinions. Shakespeare was quite as at home in his splendid azure as we are in our kitchen room. Why kitchen him? We need scullions less than we need poets. What if the scullion became poet? I have known them to become so by the sweet providence of God. I could rehearse the story of a dishwasher, a man old and gray and alone, who died at a hotel kitchen washing dishes, as was his wont, who was a soul which outsoared eagles and the sun. Ah! me, the poet he was when Jesus touched him! Let men get out into the sky who can. Plenty of us stay upon the ground. The streets and the field will have population, never fear; but the dizzying altitudes where the Pleiades stretch their wings, who shall companion with them there? So, peace to the prating about simplicity. Give some strong souls to space, to neighbor with Eternity, and let them come from far and bring back on their shining wings from their far soarings dust from the hidden suns. So shall we know a little of that holy dust flicked on our garments. "From afar" is just how Francis Thompson impresses us. He is not a

## A POET CHRYSOSTOM

native of our town, he is a passer through our town. What world he was born in we can but wonder at; though what matters it, since his speech is so full of all refreshment and radiance and redolence? What odds is it from what corner of the world he saw the day-spring? He saw it and we see him. Golden-mouth, speak on! Have and hold are the words, Strong Singer. Have a hold on thy words as the singers do. Haste not with thy goings; we wait to hear them. We are not as pressed for time as we look, nor as we thought. We have leisure to wait a little space while thou speakest on and on. Not all need to run; some may loiter. Let them.

This flight backward to start to fly forward which I observe in Thompson fairly charms me. I answer to it as to starlight. "Where did this poet stay?" is thrust in on me. Can we hear the whippoorwill night by night in dusk or moonlight without wondering where he spends his days? Where does this remote-phrased poet keep house by day? Where could a body reach him with a missive? He is native to a realm remote—not to some city flat. Where is Camelot and Caerleon? Where dwell the princes in their coats of gold? There dwells this poet. Knows anyone where Caerleon uplifts its pinnacles of gold? If not, we shall not knock at this poet's door. Let be. He comes though, from very far.

Francis Thompson has been compared to Crashaw and Cowley and quaint George Her-

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

bert, and to Shelley in his "Epipsychedion." Herbert's "The Collar" has been specially mentioned. Why must we always compare? Can we not let well enough alone? "One star differeth from another star in glory," yet why compare the stars? One star alone could make the night divine. My own opinion is that neither Cowley nor Crashaw can compare with Francis Thompson, and the "Epipsychedion"—in patches a noble poem—breaks in its own weight in this: it seems much ado about little. The clamor is too great for the occasion. There needs to be distinct relevancy between event and ceremonial to keep congruity alive. Of course my feeling about "Epipsychedion" is of slightest value, yet as opinion it has a value. As we feel, we speak. On Francis Thompson there is such a splendor thrown about any event, however apparently incomplex, as that we feel that were we qualified with inner knowledge, we should find a larger field than we now perceive. His cloth is many-colored. It is tapestry, and woven by king's daughters clad in rare apparel. Souls are near and remote—a moment near and then a thousand æons removed. Where Francis Thompson is we are never in company with anything but souls. Souls! "All Souls"—what a charmed name for a Church. Here Francis Thompson worships. I feel Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Morris, in "The Blessed Damosel" and "The Defense of Guinevere," to be spirituelle rather than

## A POET CHRYSOSTOM

spiritual. I feel Francis Thompson to be spiritual rather than spirituelle. One may be spirituelle and very flimsy, but “to be spiritually minded is life,” and very deep, sea-deep, sky-deep; and Francis Thompson stays where the depth is under him and the height is over him. I recall the fascinating oratory of the Christ, “Launch out into the deep,” and always with a thrill as he spoke it in my hearing and I climbed to lift the sail! Francis Thompson has heard the beckoning voice and has launched out into the deep. No reefs are where his boat makes answer to the winds. In “The Blessed Damosel” is something sensuous. We feel the charm of a poem resident in its earthly unearthiness. We perceive the woman and not the saint. In Francis Thompson it is not so. They are enskied and sainted, these saints of his. We hear the rush of wings and ourselves announce the angels are hovering around. Any “Saint” may illustrate this suggestion. Of this saint say:

His shoulder did I hold  
    Too high that I or bold  
Weak one  
    Should lean on thee.  
But he a little doth  
    Decline his stately path  
And my  
    Feet set more high;  
That the slack arm may reach  
    His shoulder and faint speech  
Stir  
    His unwithering hair.

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

And bolder now and bolder  
I lean upon that shoulder,  
So dear  
He is and near:  
And with his aureole  
The tresses of my soul  
Are blent  
In wished content.

Or this from “Retrospect”:

What profit if the sun  
Put forth his radiant thews,  
And on his circuit run,  
Even after my device, to this and to that use,  
And the true Orient, Christ,  
Make not his cloud of thee?  
I have sung vanity,  
And nothing well-devised.

And though the cry of stars  
Give tongue before his way  
Goldenly as I say,  
And each from wide Saturnus to hot Mars  
He calleth by its name,  
Lest that its bright feet stray;  
And thou have lore of all,  
But to thine own Sun’s call  
Thy path disorbed hast never wit to tame;  
It profits not withal,  
And my rede is but lame.

Only that, ’mid vain vaunt  
Of wisdom ignorant,  
A little kiss upon the feet of Love  
My hasty verse has stayed  
Sometimes a space to plant;  
It has not wholly strayed,  
Not wholly missed near sweet, fanning proud  
plumes above.

## A POET CHRYSOSTOM

Therefore I do repent  
That with religion vain,  
And misconceivèd pain,  
I have my music bent  
To waste on bootless things in skiey-gendered rain:  
Yet shall a wiser day  
Fulfill more heavenly way,  
And with approved music clear this slip,  
I trust in God most sweet;  
Meantime the silent lip,  
Meantime the climbing feet.

From “The Dread of Height,” this:

For low they fall whose fall is from the sky.  
Yea, who me shall secure  
But I of height grown desperate  
Surcease my wing, and my lost fate  
Be dashed from pure  
To broken writhings in the shameful slime:  
Lower than man, for I dreamed higher,  
Thrust down by how much I aspire,  
And damned with drink of immortality?  
For such things be,  
Yea, and the lowest reach of reeky Hell  
Is but made possible  
By foreta'en breath of Heaven's austorest clime.

These tidings from the vast to bring  
Needeth not doctor nor divine,  
Too well, too well  
My flesh doth know the heart-perturbing thing;  
That dread theology alone  
Is mine,  
Most native and my own;  
And ever with victorious toil  
When I have made  
Of the deific peaks dim escalade,  
My soul with anguish and recoil

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

Doth like a city in an earthquake rock,  
As at my feet the abyss is cloven then,  
With deeper menace than for other men,  
Of my potential cousinship with mire;  
That all my conquered skies do grow a hollow mock,  
My fearful powers retire,  
No longer strong,  
Reversing the shook banners of their song.

Ah, for a heart less native to high Heaven,  
A hooded eye, for jesses and restraint,  
Or for a will accipitrine to pursue!  
The veil of tutelar flesh to simple livers given,  
Or those brave-fledging fervors of the Saint  
Whose heavenly falcon-craft doth never taint,  
Nor they in sickest time their ample virtue mew.

The poet chants himself when, in "Assumpta Maria," "Help comes with lion leap," and in this poem a single phrase which is fitted to stay immortal is "Beating Godward." Thompson is temperamentally spiritual. He is so and does not notice, just as Thackeray was temperamentally moralist, and moralizes, not seeing that he does. From all Thompson's poems graphically shines this redemptive quality. "The things which are not seen are eternal" is unconsciously, though surely, matter for his thought, and so, whatever his theme, drifts away as the clouds do toward the heavens. To such as care for the spiritualities, and care to live in them by the grace of God, here is a helper.

If you were to hang Francis Thompson's immortality on a single hook, that hook would doubtless be "The Hound of Heaven." As the immor-

## A POET CHRYSOSTOM

tality of Keats might hang on "The Ode to a Nightingale," or of Emerson on the cabalistic poem "Days," or Mrs. Stowe on "When purple morning breaketh," or Joaquin Miller on "Columbus," or Whittier on "When on my day of life the night is setting," or Lowell on "The Commemoration Ode," or Mrs. Browning on the "Sonnets from the Portuguese," or Stephen Phillips on "Marpessa," or Alfred Tennyson on "Ulysses," so Francis Thompson would have easy thoroughfare through immortality by "The Hound of Heaven." And wisely so. In that poem he is all there. His remoteness, his soul-nearness, his splendor of diction, his golden glow, his mastery in tense phrasing, his flight far as the flight of stars, his imperiality of conscience, his distinct sense of God, his immediate sense of God in heart and soul, his Christ sense, his absolute knowledge of the necessity of holiness hold sky heights here above his other highly endowed poems. Here is his whip hand, which lays on nor spares, which hurts to heal, which whistles in the wind and stings like thongs of steel, yet which has the sound "of the sweet south which breathes above a bank of violets, stealing and giving odors." His involvedness, all his far-fetched phrase, yet luminous, which would set a dark night on fire, these are all here. In a way we might say that in this poem, splendid in its massiveness, we have all the wealth of this man's mind and all he truly meant to say. All else might be set

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

down as froth: this was his wave, buoyant, far coming, far going, uplifting in its sublime billowing. It should be printed by some disciple of Aldus Manutius in beauty fitting its own beauty. To now, it has not been so set. It will be. May the time be soon. Having set this laureate poem so high, let it not be inferred that what remains is persiflage. Far from it. Some other had been queen had this not been written. Francis Thompson is robust odist. He cannot help it. That flames forth from his wideness of strength and thought. It stretches as a great circle, slow-going, but a mighty orb at the last. We might compare him with those other noblest English ode writers, and Francis Thompson would not blush that he were present, though such conclusion is ever unessential. Not who is first, but that one might be first, is noblest riches, but to be set with Cowley, Lowell, Keats, Wordsworth, Milton, is immortality enough. He liveth and shunneth death, who rests in company with such great poet masters, and will wear a diadem all of gold, chased in olive wreath, whose brow is wreathed with such high companionships. Or suppose this were done: an anthology made of his passages which resound in the soul in some such wise as his own description has it, "That voice is round me like a bursting sea." Mark these:

"As gale to gale drifts breath  
Of blossoms' death."

## A POET CHRYSOSTOM

“I sit and from the fragrance  
Dream the flowers.”

“Of locks half lifted on the wings of dream.”

“With broken stammer of the stars.”

“Flasked in the grape.”

“God sets his poems in thy face.”

“What plumèd feet the winepress trod.”

“Thy wine is flavorous of God.”

“Your skyward jetting soul.”

“Dry down and perish to the fruitless root.”

“By secret instincts inappeasable.”

Or take this as the rendering concrete the littleness that all of us must sometimes feel, where the poet reduces self to

“A dead fly in a dusty window crack.”

“Whose spirit sure is lineal to that  
Which sang Magnificat.”

“As birds see not the casement for the sky.”

“I am a darkened cage  
Song cannot hymn in.”

“Song’s Indian summer.”

“I have no heaven left  
To weep my wrongs to.”

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

“They have struck Heaven’s tent  
And gone to cover you:  
Whereso you keep your state  
Heaven is pitched over you!”

“Star-flecked feet of Paradise.”

“What of her silence, that outsweetens speech?”

“A sad musician, of cherubic birth,  
Playing to alien ears—which did not prize  
The uncomprehended music of the skies—  
The exiled airs of her far Paradise.”

“And Tenderness sits looking toward the lands of death.”

“Poor Poetry has rocked himself to sleep.”

“His reign is hooped in by the pale o’ the world.”

“And longings which affront the stars.”

“My restless wings, that beat the whole world through.”

“For its burning fruitage I  
Do climb the tree o’ the sky.”

“Those Eyes my weak gaze shuns,  
Which to the suns are Suns,  
Did  
Not affray your lid.”

“The shoulder of your Christ  
Find high  
To lean thereby.”

“So flaps my helpless sail.”

“Life is a coquetry  
Of death which wearies me.

## A POET CHRYSOSTOM

A tiring-room where I  
Death's divers garments try  
Till fit some fashions sit.  
It seemeth me too much  
I do rehearse for such  
A mean  
And single scene."

"The grave is in my blood."

"When doom puffed out the stars."

"A whole God's breadth apart."

"With hair that musters  
In globed clusters,  
In tumbling clusters like swarthy grapes."

"Like a rubied sun in a Venice sail."

"But a great wind blew all the stars to flame."

"Deliberate speed, majestic instancy."

"Lest having Him I must have naught beside."

"I said to dawn, Be sudden, to eve, Be soon."

"Clung to the whistling main of every wind."

"But soon from her own harpings taking fire."

"I shook the pillaring hours  
And pulled my life upon me."

"Long savannahs of the blue."

"Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurm o'  
their feet."

"Still with unhurrying haste."

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

“Lucent weeping out of the dayspring.”

“Lo, naught contents thee who contents not me.”

“Ah, must Thou char the wood ere thou canst limn  
with it?”

“Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds  
From the hid battlements of eternity.”

“That voice is round me like a bursting sea.”

“The immutable crocean dawn.”

“As when the surly thunder smites upon the clangèd  
gates of heaven.”

“Ridgy reach of crumbling stars.”

“The singer there where God’s light lay large.”

“Like the tattered wing of a musty moth.”

“The life I textured, thou the song.”

“The Mary titled Magdalene.”

“To see ourselves with the eyes of God.”

“In vasty dusk of life abroad.”

“And the harebell shakes on the windy hill,  
Oh the breath of the distant surf.”

“Then went her sunshine way.”

“So fearfully the sun doth sound  
Clanging up beyond Cathay.”

“Pierce thy heart and find the key.”

## A POET CHRYSOSTOM

“In skies that no man sees to move  
Lurk untumultuous vortices of power.”

“And is made a habitation.  
For the fluctuous Universe.”

Or the horror of this:

“The lowest reach of reeky Hell.”

“My soul with anguish and recoil  
Doth like a city in an earthquake rock.”

“Laughing captive from the wishing west.”

“Leashed with longing.”

“Back from the windy vaultages of death.”

“Or cling a shameful fungus there in Hell.”

“By this, O singer, know we if thou seek,  
When men shall say to thee, Lo, Christ is here,  
When men shall say to thee, Lo, Christ is there,  
Believe them: yea, and this—then art thou seer,  
When all they crying clear  
Is but lo here, lo there, ah me, lo everywhere.”

“The world so as the vision says  
Doth with great lightning-tramples run.”

“A little told of the never told.”

“And the dream of the world is dream in dream.”

“Hath trumpeted  
His clangorous, ‘Sleep no more,’ to all the dead.”

“The world’s unfolded blossom smells of God.”

“What winds with music wept  
Over the founder'd sea.”

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

“I in this house lifted, marred,  
So ill to live in, hard to leave.”

“Wide o'er rout-trampled night  
Flew spurned the pebbled stars.”

“To long in aching music.”

“Who scarfed her with the morning.”

“I so star-wearied overwarred.”

“The stars still write their golden purposes  
On Heaven's high palimpsest,  
And no man sees.”

“Unbanner your bright locks.”

“A calm of intempestuous storm.”

“Sifts in his hands the stars.”

“Thou puttest on  
Strange sanctities of pathos.”

“The solemn purple thistle stands in the grass  
Grey as an exhalation.”

“Where the rat memory does its burrows make.”

“Clap my wise foot-rule to the walls o' the world.”

“Thou fillest thy mouth with nations, gorkest slow  
On purple æons of kings. Man's hulking towers  
Are carcases for thee.”

“Hear'st thou not  
The world's knives bickering in their sheaths?”

“Into the cleansing sands o' the thirsty grave.”

## A POET CHRYSOSTOM

“The muddy wine of life.”

“Here I untrammel,  
Here I pluck loose the body of cerementing  
And break the tomb of life; here I shake off  
The bar o’ the world, man’s congregation shun,  
And to the antique order of the dead  
I take the tongueless vows; my cell is set  
Here in thy bosom; my little trouble is ended  
In a little peace.”

“It came up redolent of God.”

“Like gray clouds, one by one my songs upsoar  
Over my soul’s cold peaks.”

“Methinks my angel plucked my locks.”

“It knew the eyes of stars which make no stay,  
And with the thunder walked upon the hills.”

“To make song wait on life, not life on song.”

“The gardener of the stars.”

“Great noiseless meres of radiance.”

“No thought but you were garden to.”

“Which the whole girth of God secures.”

“Make lights like shivered moonlight on long waters.”

“Tip-toe on the sound o’ the surge.”

“And heaves her scoffing sea.”

“And all the firsts are hauntings of some lost.”

“Till skies be fugitive.”

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

Viewing this stately retinue, we may say Death himself could warm his hands at fires like these. For shattered splendors Francis Thompson may vie with Robert Browning. These phrasings seem to me like shattered rainbows glowing on the ground.

Or take up those colossal poems—for a lesser word to characterize them would be defective—the various odes, “The Orient Ode,” “Ode to the Setting Sun,” “An Anthem of Earth,” “A Corymbus for Autumn,” “The Hound of Heaven,” “From the Night of Forebeing,” and others which keep the ode pitch of tune as in that penetrant poem “The Dread of Height,” which for thought-weight is passionately impressive, and we feel the poet manhood of the man. When reading such craggy poems, life grows great on the moment. This poet handles stars and earths and suns with easy aptitude. Depths are in him down which the rays of light vainly finger. We stumble over great matters when we walk this man’s pathway; and that is good for all of us. He has an Oriental love of light, and sunrise or sunset or birth or death each cling to him and claim from him a song, nor plead in vain; they have their song of him. He is an Apollo for them. He blows upon the trumpet of the sea, and we think thunders have hired a trumpeter. About the truthfulest word I can express my own feelings in over these poems, is that their glory reminds me of a turbulent sunset sea after

## A POET CHRYSOSTOM

the storm, when every wave is a new episode of variant fire and your boat rocks till you seem about to be engulfed in splendor; above you the wave all fire, below you the wave all fire, while beyond you runs a wave all fire. You sag with the fiery sea and float on a wave passionate as lava, yet are not consumed. Consider these extracts as indicative of the tremendousness of Francis Thompson when he uses the ode to express himself.

From "A Corymbus for Autumn" select this:

Richer than ever the Occident  
Gave up to bygone Summer's wand.  
Day's dying dragon lies drooping his crest,  
Panting red pants into the West.  
Or the butterfly sunset claps its wings  
With flitter alit on the swinging blossom,  
The gusty blossom, that tosses and swings,  
Of the sea with its blown and ruffled bosom;  
Its ruffled bosom where through the wind sings  
Till the crisped petals are loosened and strown  
Overblown, on the sand;  
Shed, curling as dead  
Rose-leaves curl, on the flecked strand.  
Or higher, holier, saintlier, when, as now,  
All nature sacerdotal seems, and thou.  
The calm hour strikes on yon golden gong,  
In tones of floating and mellow light,  
A spreading summons to even-song:  
See how there  
The cowled night  
Kneels on the Eastern sanctuary-stair.  
What is this feel of incense everywhere?  
But a great wind blew all the stars to flare,  
And cried, "I sweep the path before the moon!"

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

For she is coming soon"—  
Then died before the coming of the moon.  
And she came forth upon the trepidant air,  
In vesture unimagined-fair,  
Woven as woof of flag-lilies;  
And curled as of flag-lilies  
The vapor at the feet of her,  
And a haze about her tinged in fainter wise.  
As if she had trodden the stars in press,  
Till the gold wine spurted over her dress,  
Till the gold wine gushed out round her feet;  
Spouted over her stained wear,  
And bubbled in golden froth at her feet,  
And hung like a whirlpool's mist round her.

How have I, unaware,  
Forgetful of my strain inaugural,  
Cleft the great rondure of thy reign complete,  
Yielding thee half, who hast indeed the all?  
I will not think thy sovereignty begun  
But with the shepherd sun  
That washes in the sea the stars' gold fleeces,  
Or that with day it ceases,  
Who sets his burning lips to the salt brine,  
And purples it to wine;  
While I behold how ermined Artemis  
Ordainèd weed must wear,  
And toil thy business;  
Who witness am of her,  
Her too in autumn turned a vintager;  
And, laden with its lampèd clusters bright,  
The fiery-fruited vineyard of this night.

From a huge cliff of song, to wit, "The Hound of Heaven," splinter off two crags:

Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist  
I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,  
Are yielding; cords of all too weak account  
For earth with heavy griefs so overplussed.

## A POET CHRYSOSTOM

Ah! is Thy love indeed  
A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,  
Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?

Ah! must—  
Designer infinite!—

Ah! must thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn  
with it?

“How hast thou merited—  
Of all man’s clotted clay the dingiest clot?

Alack, thou knowest not  
How little worthy of My love thou art!  
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,  
Save Me, save only Me?

All which I took from thee I did but take,  
Not for thy harms,  
But just that thou might’st seek it in My arms.

All which thy child’s mistake  
Fancies as lost I have stored for thee at home:  
Rise, clasp My hand and come.”

Halts by me that footfall:  
Is my gloom, after all,  
Shade of his hand outstretched caressingly?

“Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,  
I am He whom thou seekest!  
Thou drawest love from thee, who drawest me.”

Strong poet, have thy sway.

## VII

### RECOVERED YESTERDAYS

I HAD never read "The Mystery of Edwin Drood." I am no reader of serial stories, the reason being I do not care to wallow in doubt for a month or even a week. I want the end to come and hurry up about it. I cannot be quit of this, nor would I. So many things in life pull me into the aching center of things whose outcome are all dubitant that when fiction comes to my door I want it to be a calming visitant. A touch of twilight with its kindly color of sunset light is a desideratum with me in fiction. So many of the fictions are tragedies or border on tragedies that I will not demand, as many do, that these be absent, but I would have a story so far as I am concerned, crush through its tempest to shore and panting if need be lie and gasp for breath on the windy strand.

Thus it comes about that I never read "The Mystery of Edwin Drood." All else of Charles Dickens I have read, and read again and yet again often times. There is in him a leisureness, a love of human life in all its aspects which is like common love with common folks unreticent, reiterant, in-

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS

consequent, noisy, often deep as seas and full of pathos betimes and full of laughter other times, which flies out like birds from the steeple; but even his humor is sacred and pregnant with the heat of hearts and the joy of hearts and the life and love and losses and death of hearts. So I have read Charles Dickens since a lad and shall I doubt me not, till I am grown old, a broken tree trunk in the winds.

But “The Mystery of Edwin Drood” was incomplete. Its author had entered that severer mystery called Death ere he had shown what Edwin Drood’s mystery was.

Books I knew had been written on what this mystery might be. Lang and Nicoll and others had sleuthed into this mystery as they thought, but in my brain and heart I had mysteries too many and all around through folks and history, to tamper with any not mine in necessity. As often as I had let my eager eyes run over the titles on the backs of Dickens’s volumes a sweet thrill like a remembered twilight would run across my memory as each title would salute my eyes, yet as I encountered the title “The Mystery of Edwin Drood” I hurried on as if it and I were strangers. Then a year or thereabouts ago I bought in England “The Mystery of Edwin Drood” in the original parts. Such things any Dickensean would want about his library. I had “Bleak House” in the nineteen original parts and now I had “The Mystery of Edwin Drood” in six parts bound in blue paper

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

covers, beginning with April and closing with September, 1870, and *The Edwin Drood Advertiser*, full of advertisements for which I have no regard and to which I give only a scant and passing glance. Some folks would have these parts bound and many have them bound. Not so this folk that wears my name. "In the original parts" sounds well in my ears. My Thackeray's "*The Virginians*," in parts (in yellow backs with advertisements), holds me with its glittering eye something after the manner of the Ancient Mariner with the wedding guest. But there was no author's death to interrupt "*The Virginians*," so that the parts were interrupted by black deep lines and a picture of the great Thackeray, while in this copy of "*The Mystery of Edwin Drood*," the closing number has a picture of Charles Dickens, and publisher's note as follows: "All that was left in manuscript of '*Edwin Drood*' is contained in the Number now published—the sixth. Its last entire page had not been written two hours when the event occurred which one very touching passage in it (grave and sad but also cheerful and reassuring) might seem almost to have anticipated. The only notes in reference to the story that have since been found concern that portion of it exclusively, which is treated in the earlier Numbers. Beyond the clues therein afforded to its conduct or catastrophe, nothing whatever remains; and it is believed that what the author would himself have most desired is done, in placing before the reader without further

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS

note or suggestion the fragment of ‘The Mystery of Edwin Drood.’ 12th August, 1870.”

So that these pages on which the eyes of the great imaginative Dickens last fell before he entered the mystery which outmysteries all the mysteriousness of Edwin Drood, have a haunting fascination for me I cannot be quit of. The beginning of the story is so unlike Dickens, whose productions were criticized overmuch because they eventuated in no surprises. We knew as we went along where we should come out as in traveling a familiar road. And it is no trivial compliment to Charles Dickens’s genius that in his latest book he should set about writing a detective story housing a mystery so completely that nobody has satisfactorily ferreted out that mystery for anybody save himself. Aside from this, the marks of Dickens are everywhere, his clearness of perception of his own characters, his introduction of dire folk deserving to be undone, his sweet loquaciousness, his introduction of more people than there seemed to be any need of and his intimacy with them all, and this story proceeding with the mystery deep as a tide in the dark, now running up the shore and now out toward the sea. And then there was no more Charles Dickens on this earthly scene! And holding this fragment of the novel in my hands, I could hear the whisper, the wild haunting whisper and then the tearful whisper and then the tear-drenched whisper, “Charles Dickens is dead,” and the whisper was an English

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

whisper and ran around the world. This novelist had seemed so vital, so robust, so kin to all vitality as that it did not appear he could die. And now, as the whisper said, "Charles Dickens is dead."

Under these circumstances I read for the first time, "The Mystery of Edwin Drood." I seemed like one sitting up silent in the room of death. The wind blew so as to startle me. I felt the tremor and the thrill that lay within the mystery, but not the mystery of Edwin Drood, but the mystery of the dead. It is not possible to say with any wholesale use of words quite the shadow and the loss and the twilight that lay upon me while I read this book, fresh as it seemed to me from the warm hand and hot heart of Charles Dickens, lover of Mankind. The day was sweet and full of June, and the sky was bright and banners of cloud flung from many an invisible flagstaff in the skies, and there were notes of wild lyrics of many birds coming in at the open windows, but not the less but rather the more, the solemn silence, the strange muteness of a death-chamber was on me. I heard the bustle of the streets, the calling of the London crowd, those varied voices which to Charles Dickens were forever dear, yet through them all the ghostly silence crept like a wan river through a shivering dusk. "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" deepened on me. That dull and more stupendous mystery of how a great vitality can shoulder into the mists of

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS

the grave and those mists close in after him and we see him no more amongst the sons of men, that mystery increased the book mystery and rendered it impressive and put the sunlight of the June into shadow and my spirit into shadow with the shadow day. Not again in my lifetime will there intrude two such wandering ghastly hands to touch me with their fingers on the cheeks and lay their hand palms on my shoulders, and then a leaning face, half shadow and half shivering fog, stoop as to look me in the eyes, and when I looked there was no face and there were no eyes and the hands had been blown away as a bit of fog is blown from a wayside pond. Charles Dickens appeals to me as the most vital Englishman of the nineteenth century; and there I sat who loved him and whose boyhood memories were mixed with his necromancy and who had grown up under the lordship of him. For who is there among the lords of fiction who so kinged it over people while he was with them as Charles Dickens? Whether it were in England or America, he did unbelievable things. To read the story of how people stood in New York in long and smiling lines waiting for the sale of tickets to Charles Dickens's readings, forming into line before it was open day and standing uncomplainingly for hours —such things seem like fiction, and were not.

And I held in my hands his closing touch of life. I fumbled over the leaves, I groped as among shadows. My footing was insecure as one who

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

walks along a slippery river side all unfamiliar to his feet. And the day of him haunted me. One tug on my spirit was toward this day: another tug of my spirit was toward yesterday. A yesterday with the sun at noon and shining gladly in the sky and then at high noon or a little past the noon there was no sunshine, yet it was not dark. Charles Dickens is dead. I seemed to feel the world's sense of an irreparable loss, but I was reading "*The Mystery of Edwin Drood*," and mystery it stays, but it is a little mystery and not at all significant. The vast unvolatile mystery is, that Charles Dickens was dead, and is not, and that he was writing "*The Mystery of Edwin Drood*," and the dénouement of the mystery was in his brain and his writer's fingers fingered toward its elucidation, and then his fingers cramped and his eyes could not see the page and his brain grew dazed, and he asked what time of the day it was, and Death said, "It is night." *The Mystery of Edwin Drood!*

A second recovered yesterday in my experience was the reading of "*Poems by Alfred Tennyson, in two volumes, 1843, Edward Moxon.*" After years of wishing for that special edition, I own it. I had not greatly cared for the poems of 1830, nor the poems of Alfred Tennyson of 1833 (although my library contains both volumes), for they had not greatly fascinated my imagination. They were apprentice volumes. A critic of literature would find them interesting because of their pedagogic value in showing how a great poet came to himself.

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS

But I am not critic: I am just a man and glad receiver of the best. I care not so much what schoolhouse a writer learned in so he can write. The scaffolding does not much impress me. It is the cathedral impresses me. Cathedral walls and towers and spires against the stars some night when all the world is still, that impresses my spirit.

Now here I sat, in my hands the Edward Moxon two volumes, moderate-sized with dainty pages and graceful type and half bound in green morocco with golden stars filling the back, and pages unsoiled with not an owner's name to be found. From the standpoint of the bibliophile the volumes were spotless, but from my standpoint, the autograph of some owner or owners had been a part of the poetry of the volumes. I like books which show that those who own them love them, and are worthy to be set down as owners. I love to see pencil marks on the margins to mark such passages as these now departed readers loved the most and where their eyes dwelt most lingeringly.

I want to feel that he was book lover and that he bought the book for love of it and not because it was appropriate and cultivated to have a library. These ghostly early owners of these two volumes of Poems by Alfred Tennyson do not impress me favorably. In some of my Elzevirs the name of "Joseph Knight" is written with pencil; in some it is written in ink, the value of the volumes being enhanced thereby. "The Works of Homer" in my

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

library are augmented in value because the pages are elaborately annotated in the fine scholarly hand which is believed to have been that of Philip Melanchthon, classical scholar, to whom this volume is said to have belonged.

I wonder if Alfred Tennyson himself even might not have handled this particular edition. I have some books which belonged to him, but I wish he might have read with what himself called "deep-chested music," from these volumes now in my possession. He ever loved his own poems, and specially loved to read them aloud, as he so well knew how, and had he read from this his "*Morte d'Arthur*" or

"Break, break, break,  
On thy cold gray stones, O sea,"

I think the ocean would have hushed its minstrelsy a little to have heard his deep reverberant music. So I hold these volumes tenderly, wistfully. Wistfully is the word of chief repute in my feeling concerning these books. What they lure me toward is to attempt to realize the spell these two volumes cast on Tennyson's contemporary world, when on them a sudden glorious music poured as from the open sky. When the voice of him was fresh as dew upon the cheeks of flowers, what a mystic influence they wielded on such of the English-speaking world as were susceptible to the voice of poetry. We have had Tennyson so long, so beautifully long, that it is hard to make a guess as

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS

to how a generation was moved, awakening on a morning and hearing the sky filled with the dulcet deep, deathless melody and to cry, "Where? O where the voice?" or as one would to hidden woodland music, "Whose voice?" and the answer is, "Alfred Tennyson's," not Lord Tennyson, that came later, and we do not greatly care for it, save in the regard that his poetic gift made him lord, but to be poet is so much greater than to be a lord that this adds nothing to the wonder of the man. To me "Alfred, Lord Tennyson" is not so stimulative to the poetry in me as "Alfred Tennyson." Nor does "Alfred Tennyson, Poet Laureate," move my fancy as "Alfred Tennyson." "Poems by Alfred Tennyson"—that is how the world dreams of him and loves him. And what these volumes' melodious contents meant to those who heard them at their glorious first utterance is to drift back, like a thought, into the backland of years and feel the then and there and the rhythmic voices invading them.

The day I read these deeply desired volumes was in winter, and the snow was falling softly in little flakes, and the weeds along the way were clad in shining garments. I was rushing along on a hurrying railway train and the tilt of the hills scurrying past, the dip of the ravines, the stretch of the level field where the corn shocks or the cattle gathered, were snow-bound though the tree branches held no snow. The skies were slate-gray and where they touched the far-off horizon they

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

were black. It was a Tennysonian day—gray was his spirit. As I read, the day shambled toward evening and the unseen sunset. In volume one of this edition are “Recollections of the Arabian Nights,” “Ode to Memory,” “The Ballad of Oriana,” “The Lady of Shalott,” “Œnone,” “The Palace of Art,” “The May Queen,” “The Lotos Eaters,” “The Dream of Fair Women,” and his many exquisite pictures of women. These were such as he had rewritten in answer to criticisms, had varied their music to some degree. In volume two are “Morte d’Arthur,” “Dora,” “St. Simeon Stylites,” “Ulysses,” “Locksley Hall,” “Godiva,” “The Day Dream,” “St. Agnes,” “Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere,” “The Vision of Sin,” and “Break, Break, Break.” What magical lines they were, creating atmospheres in whose bewildering shadows all things appeared possible and nothing in anywise incredible! What they did was to lift their voice and sing and sing. I was sitting in my gray, snowy landscape and looking out into the gray of it and feeling its twilight when there was none, but all the while, singing like a linnet in the hedgerow or a nightingale in the moonlight, or a throstle by the way, were these unquenchable lyrics of Alfred Tennyson, lonely and lovely and compelling and so wistful.

I would not eliminate his after years. I cannot feel with many who write that had Alfred Tennyson written nothing other than these two volumes of 1842, we should have retained all that was most

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS

wonderful in him, and that all the work of his after days was unspontaneous music. It is easy to dupe ourselves in literary matters and passing easy to persuade ourselves that what the poets wrote in their sweet freshness in their early poet morning was their entrancing melody. We cannot keep house without "Enoch Arden," nor without that concluding line in "Guinevere,"

"Past  
To where beyond these voices there is peace,"

nor that passing sibilant melody "Frater Ave atque Vale," nor the "Early Spring," nor that peculiarly beautiful sea-wave meter in the "Lines to Virgil," nor many a golden cloud in the "Idyls of the King," nor that concluding melody which is like a vesper sparrow's song, last voice preceding the long silence of the dark, "Crossing the Bar."

"Merlin and the Gleam," was written at eighty, and for rhythmic beauty and fluid motion can scarcely be surpassed, and added to that is the hope and the light of the Gleam.

"Not of the sunlight,  
Not of the moonlight,  
Not of the starlight!  
O young Mariner,  
Down to the haven,  
Call your companions,  
Launch your vessel,  
And crowd your canvas,  
And, ere it vanishes  
Over the margin,  
After it, follow it,  
Follow The Gleam."

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

The Gleam is immortal.

“The Throstle” warbles like a new-come bird or a just-come poet. One of the most thrilling lyrics in our language, and written when the lyrst was eighty years; and “Crossing the Bar” is a sea-change poem of fluent melody of surpassing beauty. Probably there is not out of Tennyson since Shakespeare’s day, a more tender lyric or a purer lyric; and the master was eighty-one years of age when he penned it.

“Far—Far—Away,” is such a far swift view for aged eyes and light like

The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening bells  
Far—far—away.

I can scarcely conceive of a wistful lyric more tender and sagacious and with more of the linnet voice.

And “The Oak” is

Trunk and bough,  
Naked strength.

“The Death of OEnone, and Other Poems,” published when the poet was eighty-three, I can but feel possesses poet qualities which had preserved any poet through the long immortal years had he written nothing other. In “Akbar’s Dream” the “Hymn to the Sun” is a rush of light like a dawn. Once again thou flamest heavenward, once again we see thee rise. Every morning is thy birthday gladdening human hearts and eyes.

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS

Every morning here we greet it, bowing lowly  
down before thee,  
Thee the Godlike, thee the changeless in thine ever-  
changing skies.

Shadow-maker, shadow-slayer, arrowing light from  
clime to clime,  
Hear thy myriad laureates hail thee monarch in their  
woodland rhyme.

Warble bird, and open flower, and, men, below  
the dome of azure  
Kneel adoring Him the Timeless in the flame that  
measures Time!

And "St. Telemachus" has murmurous lines that  
might intrude on the long ago "Morte d'Arthur."

And "Silent Voices" are twilight bells bidding  
us good-morrow.

When the dumb Hour, clothed in black,  
Brings the Dreams about my bed,  
Call me not so often back,  
Silent Voices of the dead,  
Toward the lowland ways behind me,  
And the sunlight that is gone!  
Call me rather, silent voices,  
Forward to the starry track  
Glimmering up the heights beyond me  
On, and always on!

There are so many haunting melodies scattered  
throughout this poet's version of life that I for one  
should feel strangely impoverished if all the after  
years from 1842 had been lost to the world. Yet  
having said all this, the wonder rests on that long-  
lost day that filled the air with wonder and the heart  
with song and the day and night with dreams.

This I tried to realize as in a dream in the gray

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

day of snowy weather on a landscape Poet Tennyson knew not of, and how I succeeded or whether I succeeded I know not, only the “golden pomp” Tibullus sang of long ago came over me and would not pass away.

A bright recovered yesterday was reading a first edition of “Quentin Durward, Edinburgh: printed for Archibald Constable, Edinburgh, Hurst, Robinson and Company, London, 1823.” Here at last one of the famous though defunct “three-volume novels” as popular in their day as the blue-paper-bound monthly issues of Charles Dickens or the yellow-paper-backed issues of William Makepeace Thackeray. These reading vogues are not a little curious and are ever interesting. In reading William De Morgan’s “When Ghost Meets Ghost,” a portly volume in small-type print reaching eight-hundred and sixty-two pages, one wonders how many Scott volumes they would prolong into or how many of the Dickens-Thackeray monthly paper books it would accumulate into and whether it would not be running yet! We twentieth-century people want a novel in its entirety to carry in the traveling grip. The last novel I recall being in two volumes was Mrs. Humphry Ward’s “Sir Charles Tressidy,” though her wandering and unsmiling Robert Elsmere could have wound through a half dozen naturally sized books even if as to contents it could have been put into a couple of hundred pages and lost nothing of its proper subject matter. It was long-

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS

drawn-out, but failed in being “linked sweet-  
ness.”

Now, to handle and read “Quentin Durward,” in three volumes, printed in the year 1823 and written by “The Author of Waverley,” is to get a body in the open in that day when “The Author of Waverley” was a name to strike you like sheet lightning. The same disability is on the spirit here as in reading “The Mystery of Edwin Drood,” and the second, or 1842, edition of Poems by Alfred Tennyson. To wrench oneself out of the now and thrust oneself into the then, especially if the book has been read and re-read and then re-read once more, requires an agile and vigorous imagination and constitutes a piece of mental transportation quite remarkable. 1870, and Dickens’s “Mystery of Edwin Drood”; 1842, and “Tennyson’s Poems”; and 1823, and “Quentin Durward, by ‘The Author of Waverley.’” With the curtain of mysteries before his face, and his hand writing as thrust beyond the curtain and holding a battle sword for a pen—such is “Quentin Durward,” a novel which is precursor, as I take it, of the fiction of valor and ruction and miscellaneous sword thrust which has become so popular and which is so sedative to disturbed nerves of the over-worked brain. Stanley Weyman, Conan Doyle in “The White Company,” Dr. Weir Mitchell, Anthony Hope, Crockett when he has winter in his weather and his blood, are disciples of “Quentin Durward,” by “Waverley.”

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

“Quentin Durward” outmarches, outfights, outblusters, outloves them all.

The story moves in that mediævalism which is the boast and weakness of William Morris, and is far enough away to haunt us by its shadows, which we cannot investigate with any lantern; so it stays shadowy, which is elemental in romance. The touch of democracy on the wandering poor man in this wandering unknown adventure has its appeal to our democratic bias of nowadays. I think so and I hope so. And when this wandering hero whose riches were his war gear, came rollicking along the open road infested with dangers, and elixir of battle and where place was to be had not for the asking, but for the fighting, and where chivalry was mainly absent and bloodthirsty spear thrust for a ducat for a lean purse scantily filled with gold, was present and where they would slay a man for a farthing, yet where a man could be a man in the midst of the orgy and come to supremacy by dint of the manliness he was, there Quentin Durward swaggered some, fought much, played the man, loved a woman, battled for her, secured her, and all this, breaking, like notes of drum and bugle upon the English world, fresh as the dew-wet morning—ah me, the thrill of it!

I carrioled (how knight-erranty that word sounds!) through the three volumes the other day upon a snowy road where winter was making free with other people’s noses and garments and frozen toes, and tossed belligerent snowflakes into the

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS

sky which were meant for ground and the wind shrieked and distances were blotted out in the skies. This bellicose day I attempted to recover this thrilling daring, mysterious yesterday. How I fared I scarcely know. Though the hazard was worth the while. How the English-speaking race was crack-brained in its reading of this melody of the wandering bow and spear and on lone moors shut in by mists, and in bulky cities and in garrets and offices and cellars and on the wide and windy sea while the ship rocked and the cordage creaked and in chimney corners when the wind crooned—in all these places the exultancy of volume one and volume two and volume three battling along in quest of Quentin Durward. All of us always in quest of Quentin Durward, poor Scotch nobleman, but nobleman howsoever Scotch or poor. I faintly catch the tingle in the blood of that day to be reckoned henceforth in the calendar as “The day of Quentin Durward, His Book,” when his advent swallowed up both nights and days for the wonder of the battle and the allegiance to the heart. Hail, Quentin Durward’s yesterday!

## VIII

### THE LITERATURE OF DEVOTION

To the thoughtful mood not many things are so impressive as to hear the invitation, "Brother Trueheart, will you lead us in prayer?" Here is a captaincy we have given little heed to in our thoughts of leadership, and yet a captaincy so solemn and sublime as to find no equivalent among the renowned leaderships of men. "Lead us in prayer." Adventure for us and ahead of us out toward God—that is what this invitation urges. But we have forgotten this noble and notable meaning, or, what is perhaps more true, we have never remembered it. He who leads in prayer goes out before us in bold and holy quest of God—climbs the high Sinai as Moses did, unafraid and yet all afraid, to find God and order his cause and our cause before him. In no way can one man render another man a wiser and calmer service than in giving direction to his Godward thoughts—to give, so to say, an initial impulse toward our heavenly Father. Good men and women want to walk out into the divine presence, which is the supreme journey taken by a soul. God is not hard to find, truly; and yet to come to him in the mood of love and devout search both facilitates

## THE LITERATURE OF DEVOTION

and enriches our meeting. God is "not far from any one of us," but how to hasten to him with immediacy, with laughing and yet sanctified and sedate approach, is an art to be studied as above all arts made much of among the sons of men. And when some man, schooled in the direct route to God, sets out, I for one will ask him to let me follow in his steps. I will care to be at the interview. For many years I have noticed this leadership in prayer with personal and pathetic interest, and seldom have failed in finding as I followed in the wake of prayer to have my spirit helped and sanctified. In prayer meeting the philosophy is not ourselves to pray at our own initiative, but to follow the initiative of another, to go his road to God. I love the road prayer takes, and have with uniformity found how helpful the journey was when taken so. Each heart has its method of access. Each has some subtle undertone of pathos springing from a dead past risen to life for a flickering moment, some groping of heart after that hand of pity which assuages the heartache of the world, some sudden leap of faith strong and bold as if an angel made it, some ingenious appeal half childish and half grand, some vision of old truths which made old truths new as love; and this is included in the ordinary leadership of prayer.

Devotional literature is such reading as puts the heart in the mood of prayer; for to make life a prayer is to be religious. This is widely dif-

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

ferent from suggesting that life is to do nothing but pray. Such a life might be essentially undevout. He who sees his brother have need and restricts his helping to prayer would be in every regard irreligious. Doing is as devout as praying. Religion consists not in praying a prayer, but in being a prayer; and the devout life, whether in cornfield or kitchen, is on its knees. With such devotion God is well pleased. Prayer is to be understood as the setting of the soul toward God as the tide sets for the shore. Anything this side of that is elocution and not prayer, while anything suffused with this spirit is grandly devout and profoundly religious. To induce this mood, then, is the end of devotion. To make the heart pant for God as the stag for the water brooks when wearied with his running is to render the chiefest service. The devout life is the prayer-charged life. When this is the spirit condition there is no trouble in keeping in tune with heaven and in touch with God. When the devotee may whisper to himself in a whisper's whisper, "I am a prayer," then will he work with least friction, sing not knowing he sings, pray with his fingers and his feet, toil thinking his work a whole holiday of gladness. This is, as we moderns understand, the Christ theory of devotion. They who say prayers through long nights of vigil and fasting and of cold are not the apostolic succession in such fashion as those who know that the prayers God is most concerned in are those which bleed from

## THE LITERATURE OF DEVOTION

the fingers worn to the bone with toiling for the saving of the world. The Christian is a working-man, sweaty with his toil. Yet are we moderns, while clearer-visioned than they who thought to leave the world to get at God, in danger of over-working our work idea. Life is not as the sunflower, wholly in the sun, but as the violet, partly in shade, partly in sun. Doing is not life's totality. There are midnights just as there are noons; and every midnight is on the road to noon. We shall not err in reckoning that we are in danger of loss in the sum total of possible effectiveness in working over much, in growing breathless, in fumbling our skein when a pause in the toil would be a helper to our effort. The art of pause is not an inconsequential part of the art of music. The rests are in the score. So must there be a pause in the holy life or the music will be sadly marred. One of a pastor's many joys is that as he goes from house to house in the brotherly vocation of pastoral visitation he can take breathing spells by being in strict privacy with God while he is in transit from one house to another. And so he comes to each parishioner fresh from God. How that privacy washes away the drudgery, so called, from the pastoral office, how filled with calm delight it makes an afternoon so spent, how the Ineffable Presence shines on him as he walks about! It is like a day of summer sunshine in a winter month. The hard-worked man can thus find abundant interval for privacy with God. I

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

have known crowded business men whose times were crammed with many callers and with many business items, and have sometimes asked them how they contrived to get a moment's space with God, and have had an answer, "I seize the moment when it comes to have my word with God." This is the secret of the holy life. We are crowded, but not so crowded as that we may not have quiet in which to make our breathing unto the "God of all comfort." We must make our battle against being crowded. We must have space to catch our breath and calm the unquiet of our turbulent career.

Hence the need of devotional literature, such books as shall help us unto the ways of God and shall underscore the weightier thoughts and relations. I have had hours many and happy with such books, and count them among my major joys and helpers. Now, we are all so much ourselves as that no one else can prescribe a devotional literature for us any more than he could a table bill of fare, though for all this we must have noticed how similar the dietary tastes of men are. We eat about the same staples. A salad, a sherbet, and such accompaniments will differ, but the edibles are mainly similar. And it may be so with large matters more than we are wont to suppose. Some staples of devotion must appeal to every spirit. All this allowed, room must be left for the individual taste in the devout as in the artistic life. I do not find myself, for instance, helped by

## THE LITERATURE OF DEVOTION

the writings of Andrew Murray or F. B. Meyer. This, I hope, is no reflection on me, and assuredly is no reflection on them. To some, even to many, they do make appeal. I chance not to be of that company. They seem to me to write religious platitudes which lack locomotion. They get nowhere. They lack for me the divine element in such writings, namely, the power to push the soul off into the sea of God as a friend sometimes pushes our boat from the strand when on summer nights we take the neglected oars for a row across waters flushed with the afterglow. The push out into God's sea is what makes a manual of devotion for me. I assume that is what everybody wants and what each must in the end determine for himself. Each must select for his own moral palate. Good talk does not suffice for me to take leadership for my devout life. There must be worthy talk, words that sweat beneath their weight of holy meaning, words which are like initiations into mysteries, greeting with a surprise the soul when it sets eyes upon their face. I demand the quality of the apocalypse. A revelation must be involved. Only where such is do I feel that my life is thrust out into the presence of the mysterious God. In much so-called devotional literature appears to me to be this cardinal defect, of supposing that pious talk is devotional talk. Still, speaking for myself, this is an outrageous blunder. Pious platitudes are irreligious when meant for the leadership of others. To indulge

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

in them for oneself may or may not be justifiable, but to inflict them on others in the name of religious reflections is a breach of morals. Goody-goody talk is not devotional, but that talk is devotional which with manly step starts out blithely heavenward, does not saunter but strides, that catches us in its forward goings, and we swing out toward Him for whom the soul is hungry. A devotional book is not an argument on religious matters, not in necessity the exposition of certain Scripture texts, not the settled face (as to say, "We shall now be devout"). "The Divine Pursuit" and "In the Hour of Silence" seem written more or less to defend the author against some charge—I would suppose from the tone, not knowing, against a charge of heresy. A book of devotion is not a heresy trial either on one side or the other. Cardinal Bona's Guide to Eternity is open to serious objection: 1. It is more heathen than Christian. 2. Its views of women are thoroughly those of a priest and utterly unlike the views of Jesus. 3. The book lacks the impulse Godward. We are weary for deep-sea soundings of the heart. Some books are good exegeses of given texts, but are not winged. They cannot fly, much less make him who reads them fly. They tell what no man in sobriety denies, but no electric spark is in the telling. This is the character of many manuals of devotion with which I am familiar. I would not say, "I dislike them," but would say, "I mislike them." They do not tell lies;

## THE LITERATURE OF DEVOTION

but they do not render truths engaging. They are not radiant, heavenly, replete with longing, glorious with hope, uncontaminate with fear. The note the poet organist lost and could never reproduce is the note these writings have lost. I care not for their music. This is not named as if readers were concerned with my personal predilections, but as a word of reminder why these suggestions of devotional literature take the road they do. Nothing dogmatic is here asserted, but simply something personal. As each has his favorite flower, so each has his spiritual preferences; and these infringe not upon the rights of anybody else. Give me leave for my posy for my heart.

What, then, from this standpoint, would appear to be the marks of a devotional book? 1. It should say something. 2. It should say something that breaks across the shore line of soul as a fifth wave across the sea bar. 3. It should possess depth as a deep wave, "Too deep for sound and foam." 4. It should have the power to wake the better part of the heart. It should have the tang of the unanticipated. 6. It should be big with God. 7. It should prate little, exhort little, but say much, and urge the soul like Christ talking with it face to face. 8. It should cause the heart to drift into the prayer mood as a quiet wind drifts a boat. 9. It should serve to give divine matters a stately preeminence which shall belittle every other thing when swung

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

into the field of vision. 10. It should make God a joy and his service a holy passion to the soul.

Now, these may or may not be the marks of a devotional fragment, but will in any case serve to help us to a pathway easy to keep. At its best, devotional literature would have all these marks in every instance; but this is not to be anticipated. If a passage or prayer can touch one of these keys, we shall be glad to have heard the prayer or passage. Differing times and moods call for differing calls—sometimes the trumpet, sometimes the lute, sometimes the thrush, sometimes the laughter of a child. The soul is so wide of gamut that we must always allow for that. In the list to follow no attempt is made to be exhaustive and give a list of devotional books; but the proclaimed purpose is to name such books or parts of books as have proven devotionally helpful to myself, with the hope that what has given me succor might have leading for others, for it is barely conceivable that in many helpers of one there would not be found some helpers to all. This list is now submitted: Saint Augustine's "The City of God" and "Confessions"; Bishop Hall's "Meditations"; Baxter's "The Saints' Everlasting Rest"; Jeremy Taylor's "Holy Living and Holy Dying"; Bunyan's three books, "Grace Abounding," "The Holy War," and "Pilgrim's Progress"; Spurgeon's "Treasury of David"; "Wesley's Journal"; à Kempis's "Imitation of Christ"; Luther's "Table Talk"; "Rutherford's Letters"; Phelps's "The Still

## THE LITERATURE OF DEVOTION

Hour"; "The Book of Common Prayer"; "Clarke on the Promises"; William Law's "Serious Call"; Horder's "American Sacred Poetry"; "The Shadow of a Rock"; "Lancelot Andrewes's Private Devotions"; the "Life of George Müller"; "The New Acts of the Apostles"; Keble's "Christian Year"; George Herbert's "Bishop Wilson's Sacra Privata"; Armstrong Black's "The Evening and the Morning"; Young's "Helps for the Quiet Hour"; Joseph Parker's Prayers; Beecher's Prayers and Sermons; Pascal's "Pensees"; Bishop How's "For All the Saints Who from Their Labors Rest"; Newman's "The Dream of Gerontius"; Jay's "Morning and Evening Exercises"; George Matheson's "Times of Retirement" and "Studies in the Portrait of Christ" and "Rests by the River;" The Prayers of the Bible; Spenser's "Faerie Queene"; Tennyson's "In Memoriam," "The Idylls of the King," "The Vision of Sin," and "The Palace of Art"; Browning's "Instans Tyrannus," "Prospice," "Christmas Eve," "Easter Day," and "Saul"; Matthew Arnold's "East London"; Bryant's "To a Waterfowl"; W. H. Channing's "My Symphony"; Henry van Dyke's "The Source" and "The Other Wise Man"; Longfellow's sonnet, "As a Fond Mother when the Day is O'er"; Rowland Williams's "Psalms and Litany"; Bacon's three essays, "Of Truth," "Of Atheism," and "On Death"; Milton's sonnets "On His Blindness," "This Three Years Day These Eyes," and "Written on His Reaching the Age of Twenty-three"; Lowell's "Sir Launfal," and "The Present

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

Crisis"; Wordsworth's "Ode to Duty"; Whittier's "Pictures," "Our Master," "The Eternal Goodness," "Questions of Life," and "At Last"; Annie Trumbull Slosson's "Deacon Phoebe's Selfish Natur"; Hawthorne's "Earth's Holocaust," and "The Celestial Railroad"; The Hymnal; The Bible.

"The City of God" is to me devotional, not so much, I think, in what it is as in the memory it evokes. The name itself sets my heart singing and hastens me to the hill from which, without lifting up my eyes, I can see the eternal city of which I trust myself to be a citizen. I can see the glinting of the golden streets and the glimmer of the golden towers and catch the blaze of walls of chrysoprase and sardius and see the peaceful river flow and catch the splendor of the "sea of glass mingled with fire." Ah me, my heart, the City of God! And thus I am touched to dreams in thinking of that early Christian who saw, past all the checkered careers of falling states, the fadeless glory of the things of God. That was a vision! Augustine wrote the first philosophy of history; and to compare it with Hegel the similarity is striking. That old lover of the Lord pulled the far ends of the circle of the ages together and made them touch. The venture was wild with daring, and he marches like a captain in the army of our God. And the "Confessions" fairly boil out of a big, hot heart. Augustine was not a repressed quantity, like

## THE LITERATURE OF DEVOTION

Matthew Arnold, but an expressed quantity. The veins in his forehead are swollen to bursting, and you can hear the drumbeat of his heart—a heart aware of God, and wisely afraid of him. I like that attitude. We shall do well to go to school to him. There is something in God to fear; and in our overworked phrase “the Fatherhood of God,” many of us have forgotten the fearfulness of God. He is in a high hill; and they who walk that way must take great heed. “With godly fear” is a thought worth practicing our lips to pronounce and our heart to remember. A passion for God—that was Saint Augustine. He wanted God; all besides seemed dirt-cheap. He would watch the sun with unwinking eyes and loved the glare of thoughts that burned like fire. He raised all great questions simply because he must who fellowships with God. The Gospels are writ in capitals because all things which touch the Christ are rendered illustrious. The sovereignty of God engulfed him as the sea does the random bather. And if he overdrew this side of the divine character, think it not strange. He saw how august God was and tarried there. His mistake in emphasis was natural and laudable. Thought was not yet schooled to get the exact emphasis; but he caught sight of some great meaning foreign to the thoughts of man thus far and blazed it on the pages of his book. God is great—Augustine knew that. God is white

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

light—he knew that too; and so sin was black as summer storm clouds. No book is wholesome devotional reading which does not by affirmation or inference assert the wickedness of sin and so, ring the alarm bells of the soul. Sin not a mistake but a curse—that is the tune to which devotion has set its music. All best lives are white with fear of sin, like a scared soldier. Notice that in the books as they pass before our eyes. “O wretched man that I am!” Who is that calling? Paul? No, the centuries of men and women who have caught a full vision of God. Who see him fall out of conceit with themselves. “Sin” is a hard word in the vocabulary of a profound life met with God. That is the crux for Huxley and Darwin and Arnold and Tyndall and the ironers down of the rude wrinkle God calls sin. They think by snubbing sin to iron it out; but their treatment of sin is their doom as moralists. Bunyan and Andrewes and Rutherford and Parker and Browning and Matheson knew better. Sin is a diabolus, an attacker. This is admirably wrought in “The Holy War;” and for that in particular do I praise that similitude. Sin never wearied, ever renewing its aggressions, subtle, acrimonious, fertile in expedient, indirect, never defeated when defeated—is that not sin? Does it not lie abased in the light of the Eden of the heart always ready, ready to make speedy entrance? Read “The Holy War”!

## THE LITERATURE OF DEVOTION

Bunyan's "Grace Abounding," for a vivid, that is, a just sense of sin, has no equal outside the book of God. It is tremendous with the sense of sin, and as tremendous with a sense of grace when men turn from their sins. This book burns like a tank of oil. Compared with such writings as Cardinal Newman's, the contrast is visible even to poor eyes in such way as no argument could disclose the defect in Newman's religious writings. Of "Pilgrim's Progress," to use many words would be "vain repetition." Oliver Wendell Holmes says: "'Pilgrim's Progress,' the *Divina Commedia* of Protestantism, is probably the only religious poem—for it is a poem in all but versification—which is read through like a novel by those who take it up for the first time." In an expression of opinion among prominent Wesleyan ministers some years ago as to those books which had been profoundly influential in their career, scarcely one omitted "Pilgrim's Progress." In our day we read it too little. This book you cannot outgrow. Its fidelity to the experiences of a Christian is so absolute as to make a moving picture of a Christian career. The book is poetry, as Holmes has said. This Bedford tinker when his heart is moved with the gospel—and a big heart he has—steps into poetry as naturally as a happy child into singing. The Saxon tongue finds the wine pressed from its grapes at the hands of this manly man who thought it joy to suffer for the Christ. I read it

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

repeatedly in a single year. I go and walk alongside Pilgrim and find my heart and lips at prayer as we make journey together toward the Delectable Mountains. When with him I must lift the song. Bishop Hall's "Meditations" have such godly depths, wisdom, research, such gracious piety, such wide goings in search of God, that to hold his hand is strength. You cannot think religion insipid when with him. Baxter's "Saints' Rest"—is it because this book I have belonged to my long-lost mother that its words are become so dear? that she read it with a heart on fire? To untwist these scarlet threads of love is not permissible. We cannot tell; but this "Rest" is dear to me, and its uphill look is full of comfort to my heart. Jeremy Taylor—but why linger? Who does not know the honey-sweet words of the poet divine, and who does not find them full of grace? They mind me of the breath of the heather on the sea cliffs where my father and mother spent their childhood. Spurgeon's "Treasury of David" I value not so much for what Spurgeon has said—though in such a book he is at his best—but for that quaint multitudinousness of sayings of the saints of God he has gathered into this harvest field of his. The good gather about the psalms as bees about purple asters. "Wesley's Journal" and "à Kempis" are to be read together. À Kempis is in the most part too lacking in vigor to suit strength, too like day-dreams on holy things, though on occasion, as in

## THE LITERATURE OF DEVOTION

his prayer, he becomes the full brother of strength; but to read him, the man of sequestered life, and Wesley, the man of the world parish, the circuit rider whose goings could only be hedged in by death, will afford a wholeness, a help for the antipodes of life. À Kempis, cloistered, introspective; Wesley, "shod with the preparation of the gospel"—for his journeys are so oft that other sandals would wear out. Wesley has dreams, but they lift into action. I know not any books so incitant to action, wakeful, intelligent, and to service cheerful and delightful, as "*Wesley's Journal*." "*Luther's Table Talk*" must do anybody good. That healthy manliness of his off dress parade, devout, humorous, vigorous, talking out of the deep places of a life which knew only one star—how his talk does put a man in tune with the infinite! Of Rutherford, say only Adeney's words: "These letters stand in the front rank of devotional works." They glow with a great love and mind us of the love of Christ. "*The Still Hour*" makes us think as well as pray. "*The Book of Common Prayer*" has access in it. What more need be affirmed? "*Clarke on the Promises*" is a book packed full of only what God has promised. They are words sweet, very sweet to hear.

William Law's "*Serious Call*" is so great and wise and devout a book that Samuel Johnson and John Wesley both found meat for men in it, and Wesley's own hand made an abridgment of it

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

for his Methodists, not as agreeing with the mystical tendency of the author but as being heartened by his profound religiousness. I have found the book very good to know. In Horder and in "The Shadow of the Rock" are poems which can lead the thought and love to God. Andrewes, so loved of Alexander Whyte, is loved of all who know a big heart—hungry, wanting God. "The Life of George Müller" is faith rendered into modern English. "The New Acts of the Apostles" is a story to put fire in the bones. Keble's "Christian Year" sings us on our way heavenward. "Quaint George Herbert!" His quaint poetical conceits do but lend emphasis to the man's love of Christ. "The Evening and the Morning" has the true devotional uplift for my spirit. "Helps for the Quiet Hour," chosen with that fine literary instinct characteristic of Dr. Young, has words fit to help the traveler along the road to God. Parker's and Beecher's prayers have wings. Of "Sacra Privata" and "Psalms and Litanies," while many words would not suffice to say the truth concerning books which are crammed with beauty, help, nobility, insight, devoutness, and divine healing, no other word than this is permissible: The books help the faith out a long way toward God. Those good men, if they could know this, would rejoice and be exceeding glad. How "All Saints" hymn rouses sluggishness into animation, doubt to faith! "The Dream of Gerontius" has vagaries truly Roman Catholic, but a hint of

## THE LITERATURE OF DEVOTION

great truths and vision of them, betimes, are good for a soul to have.

For me, George Matheson is without a peer among contemporary devotional writers. He says things. He is not given over to ejaculatory piety, but freights his meditations with such heavenly truths that as you read, yourself become ejaculatory should you proceed. The singer needs not himself applaud; the auditors will do that if the music prove worthy. In Matheson is the moving of the waters seaward; and his prayers are like your father's when his heart was full. In the poems and prose writings here named as devotional, no time is afforded to underscore. But how good they are and full of heavenward look! This remark of Lowell regarding the "Ode to Duty" may touch with a caress these various works: "In the 'Ode to Duty' he [Wordsworth] speaks out of an ampler ether than in any other of his poems, and which may safely challenge insolent Greece and haughty Rome for a comparison in either kind or degree." From these varied souls may be had a world of help ruddy with the blood of life. I cannot estimate their services to myself, those services have been so real, so varied, so instinct with the generosity learned of Christ, so unthought-out and spontaneous, like the lilt of birds. I bless the God who lifted minds to render such a holy help.

The Hymnal! Dwell upon its contribution of help! Who reads Charles Wesley's "Wrestling

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

Jacob," Bernard of Cluny's "Jerusalem the Golden," Thomas Oliver's "The God of Abram Praise," impregnates his soul with odors grown in heaven. 'Tis a book of divine leadings, rich in worthy renderings of love and longing and hope fearless of despair. "Let us all sing!"

And God's Book! Read the Psalms for their sense of God and man, and man as interesting to God. How God and man are caught up together in the Psalter! Where man is, there God is, and interested in man beyond belief. This is it which makes the Psalms perpetual as the refrain for the heart. This it is which sobs in those tearful tunes where God is seen and man is seen very full of sin. We shall never outgrow the "Sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow"; and the "Shepherd Psalm" shall whisper from sleepy lips while mankind endures. We have committed it so to heart that we say it while we fall to sleep. Job abashes the soul. Nehemiah makes sloth and indifference to hang head in shame. Lamentations drenches the soul with the grief for a state ruined and a city sin-dethroned. All the prophets wake the life to God. They blow like bugles of tempest. Ecclesiastes declares the insufficiency of the world to satisfy the hunger of man's life. Luke is so human, Matthew so kingly, Mark so martial, John so Christ-filled. Paul's prayers have a celestial summons in them. They take wing

## THE LITERATURE OF DEVOTION

when we least anticipate it. And the prayers of Jesus, how they hearten and subdue, how they guide and sustain, how they take the soul into the holiest of all and make such climates have the homelike feeling! He knew how to pray. The cry, the fleeing for succor, the gratitude that laughs while it wipes tears from the eyes, the resignation, the sublime fortitude, all in the prayers of Him who taught us how to pray. Jesus's prayers walk straight into the presence of God. They are not experiment, rather a child walking a well-known path to his father's door. Blessed prayers, blessed access! And the Passion of the Saviour is devotion's self. If ever the heart has dried up like parched ground, if prayers come slow like words to a wandering intellect, then read the "passion" chapters of the Gospels. The hill they climb leads into heaven. To see Him there! Will that not make the dry heart to be rained upon with tears? I read and cry, "My Christ, my cross!" We are to read each Gospel as if it were a journey to a mountain top; for each Gospel narrative climbs to the cross that clouds the mountain's summit with its midnight gloom. The august spectacle of the God dying for a single human soul, that brings us to our knees, that hushes our poor babblings into expectant silence. The Dying God! Dying for me! I *must* pray!

I have been impressed that there is a room and need for a book of devotion which should

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

be put into twelve vest-pocket booklets, one for each month, thus making the carrying it to the office, on the train, on the street car possible, and yet make the books of sufficient bulk to contain for each day a prayer, a text, a Scripture passage, a selection in verse or prose from some of those nobler words the hearts of manly and holy men have bubbled up like fountains of water. This would be a book of days. The Anglican devotional books are for the church year; a deeper Christian philosophy should have a book for God's year. The entirety of the year is God's and ours. The secular and the sacred year synchronize: each day and each season, mine and God's, is the right interpretation of the calendar. And a book conceived from this stand-point and executed with wide knowledge of the hymns of the ages, with a gift of prayer and a knowledge of the prayers of holy women and men, would not such a volume or volume series (twelve booklets for the months of the year) be a distinct helper for the holy life? All the ages and all the minds might lend their voices to such a book of days. The advantage, as I have found, of a book of devotion has been that it has set the thoughts of the day out with God, and has supplied, so to say, provender for the day's thinking and the day's delight. A scripture looks very different when set out thus alone than when sunk in the context. The average Bible word is too large for the soul to pronounce

## THE LITERATURE OF DEVOTION

more than one of them at once; and when they are isolated the real magnitude and meaning light the landscape of our thought. I appeal to all lovers of God's Book whether this be not so. One passage will serve as a staff for the heart all day. The leaning on it for the day of toil makes the staff precious ever after. And a poem holding a radiant thought in solution, to be set out from the book wherein it was housed with many others, becomes thereby personal and visible. The same is true of a thought in noble prose or a prayer which flowed from a heart in which God was consequential. Such a page pushes the boat of life out into the sea of day, gives it a vigorous thrust which holds to the heart through the livelong day. A book of devotion should be catholic, fetched from afar. The wise souls were never dwellers in a single house. Like families, they live under many roofs. This is the objection to such a book, to select at random, as "For Days and Years," by Lear. It is an Anglican book and contains that amusing church egotism which writes church with a capital "C" and dissenter with a small "d," and the selections of words from the wise are all but entirely from the church fathers or Roman Catholics or Anglicans. The obliviousness to the wide Christian world outside of these limits is humorous rather than devotional. Cardinal Newman is scarcely the sanest and most wholesome religious guide, to say the least. What

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

is wanted is to walk through the churches as Christ among the candlesticks, going everywhere and hearing all and holding the most precious truths as the flower the dew. True Christianity is eclectic in tastes. What holy moods have meditated and what holy men have done—these are the precious considerations. What cares the good man's heart what church David Livingstone was of, or Thomas Coke, or Hannington, or Gardiner? For each we thank God and take courage. “There is one God and Father over all, who is rich unto all that call upon him”; and that is the conclusion of the whole matter so far as touches the point of devotion. That heart which held God's hand, it is good to touch. Those eyes which for a sublime moment looked into the face of God, it is blessed to look into. The whole family of God is sacred; and the voice of any one of them, no matter what name he wears, is good to hear. “Did not our hearts burn while we listened to him by the way?” And there is and can be but one answer.

Let us listen to the words of Brother Standfast as he stands in the river waiting his turn to pass

To where beyond these voices there is peace,

recalling Rufus Choate's words, “On the whole, the most eloquent, mellifluous talk that was ever put together in the English language was the speech of Mr. Standfast in the river”; “This

## THE LITERATURE OF DEVOTION

River has been a Terror to many, yea, the thoughts of it also have often frightened me. But now methinks I stand easy; my Foot is fixed upon that on which the Feet of the Priests that bare the Ark of the Covenant stood while Israel went over this Jordan. The Waters indeed are to the Palate bitter and to the Stomach cold, yet the thoughts of what I am going to and of the Conduct that waits for me on the other side do lie as a glowing coal at my Heart. I see myself now at the end of my journey, my toilsome days are ended. I am going now to see that Head that was crowned with Thorns, and that Face that was spit upon for me. I have formerly lived by Hearsay and Faith, but now I go where I shall live by sight, and shall be with Him in whose company I delight myself. I have loved to hear my Lord spoken of, and wherever I have seen the print of his Shoe in the Earth, there I have coveted to set my Foot too. His name has been to me as a Civet-box, yea, sweeter than all Perfume. His voice to me has been the most sweet, and his Countenance I have more desired than they that have most desired the Light of the Sun. His Word I did use to gather for my Food, and for Antidotes against my Faintings. He has held me, and I have kept me from mine iniquities, yea, my Steps hath he strengthened in his Way."

## IX

### ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

I HAVE just concluded the re-reading of Elia.

Not many days ago, in a second-hand bookstore, rummaging among old books, Elia-wise, my hands fell to handling with loving touch a two-volume edition of "The Essays of Elia." In a second-hand bookstore all things are immethodical, restfully so. Thus what comes to eyes and hands comes with a dewy freshness of surprise—with the genial touch of discovery.

I was not thinking of Elia. He was as remote from my mind as he ever can be, though withal that is not saying much for his remoteness, seeing he has a way of hanging about my memory like a fragrance one would not be quit of. He is scarcely hanger-on, for he was no good borrower, though an ever-ready lender; but he is much the hanger-around—around Cousin Bridget, around the bookstall in Covent Garden, from which he had lugged home the long-coveted folio of "Beaumont and Fletcher," a hanger around the Bedlam House where Mary, dear Mary, is strait-jacketed and mad as winter winds, a hanger around where feeble folk have any need of any help. He had leisure, this Elia;

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA'

Brother Elia, shall we say, or, as his whim was, shall we name him Cousin Elia? This, or Charles? Call him all. He deserves such kindly, homely synonyms, to preserve his homely, kindly memory. Cousin Elia has much leisure, being let out on long vacation by the East India Company, whose pensioner he is, and on still longer vacation by Death, whose pensioner he has now become, so that he hath infinite leisure to hang around. No jostling street he loved nor bookkeeping ledger he did not love, can prick him into restless motion. He is at leisure, and may spend his time as his vagary directs. So may he hang around my memory.

Lest there be argument, I will admit (as no prisoner is bound to do) that Elia hangs around my study, where the books are poured on the floor and in the fireplace (where never a fire is lit, be well assured) and on tables, and piled high against the ceiling, which is well up and calls for a ladder so I may grope about with dusty hands amongst the dusty books. I cannot have the light wit to think that Elia, "Cousin Elia," hangs around with me to have my company. He was not a true lover of preachers; and I am loath to think, but must think that himself was the man Elia told of who at meals, when grace would be required, would sputter out, "Is there a clergyman here?" to which the ready answer being given, "No clergyman here," ejaculated fervently, "Thank God!" He loved not men

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

like me, though mayhap, who knows but had he seen me on Monday or Tuesday or any other day, not looking like a clergyman in garment nor feature, he had not resented my company?

Though all this is trifling. He is not hanging around here for me, but he smells my folios, and sees my old dead yesterdays of books—Josephus, four centuries old; and books printed at Venice before Columbus ogled Queen Isabella to charter caravals to adventure on the forboding sea; and manuscripts writ two hundred and twenty-five years before somebody divined the celeritous art of printing; and my old Aldines, Elzevirs, and stately Bible books of old, and royal folios of many sorts, and bindings of Roger Payne, and Aldus, and Douglas Cockerell and Cobden-Sanderson, and of French binders not a few; and at times his nervous fingering is like to grow covetous. (Brother Elia, a commandment peremptory is writ against all coveting—beware, and thou fingerest this book for long.) “Publii Virgilii Maronis Carmina (Ecloga, *Aenidos*)”—a book done by French skill on dainty paper, rubricated, and with sundry pictures in gentle style of gentle art, printed and bound by Didot in levant like the dregs of wine on wine jars of Tuscany. Or maybe he has his eye on my folio Chaucer of 1721. I will be bound that will tempt him, the shape, the age, the name, though to my comforting I remember that in his library there is a Chaucer of his own bearing date 1598,

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

and in that possession may lie my safety. Though now I bethink me that on these shelves and belonging to me is "The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer newlie printed with divers additions, which were never in print before" and bearing the magic date 1561, and in folio ("My darling folios," gasps Elia); and I will watch with sleepless vigilance while Elia noses around here—nevertheless Elia, so truly do I love him, may have this same precious volume in his two hands and when my back is turned, though it appertaineth to the rites of hospitality that the host should be at the door when the guest biddeth host adieu; and seeing this Chaucer folio is nigh to the magnitude of Elia himself, if he shall filch this same weighty and bulky volume, it shall be because my eyes are grown dim (which, gentle reader, they have *not*). And so, too, thou wast mainly mouser in old dramatists, and Laureate Chaucer being a romance poet may in some degree have hope of escaping thy filching fingers. Howbeit, the best I may, I doubt and fear. This Chaucer of mine is an old folio; and thine eyes are ever toward such, and myself know the itch of the spirit to get one more of such books as a body loves. One cannot get enough.

Plainly, Charles is hanging around for the chance of fingering these precious books of mine, and notwithstanding he has divided all mankind into two races, the race of borrowers

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

and the race of lenders, and has conceded that the lender race is a Gibeonite crew of hewers of wood and drawers of water and the aristocratic race is that of ever-to-be-noted and ever-to-be-looked-up-to lenders—notwithstanding, I will let gentle Elia, Cousin Elia, linger amongst my books and hang around these precious folios and these gentle raggednesses, garments torn through long wandering through many years from hand to hand, and these princelings garmented in royal togs. He will not borrow many; and if he does, I will wend me to his house and hang around; and will linger about until I find my stolen gentry and confront Borrower Elia with his doings and shall argue him down if I may. So shall I come back with mine own; and it shall go hard with him if I come not back with usury. I shall fetch away with me THE ESSAYS OF ELIA with ragged writing on the page-edge at the hand of Elia himself.

So Elia hangs around my study with full consent of me who am its owner, as I staunchly assert and can maintain against all comers; for my name is grimly recorded in all these books; and whose else, then, should these same books be than his whose name is writ on the proprietary page? This would I term sledge-hammer logic. Let all Aristotelians beware when they encounter me, for I am expert user of their master's method.

My Burton, a folio, is here. I cannot discern

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

whether Lamb's "Anatomy of Melancholy" was folio or no, nor can I catch the date of his well-thumbed copy. This of mine is folio, hence am I nervous when our friend of the folio-fever is about. It has an ancient smell, likewise an ancient look. When Crabb Robinson called on Mary Lamb he says he looked over Lamb's library and ventures—"He has the finest collection of shabby books I ever saw, such a number of first-rate works of genius but filthy copies." (Have care, thou caller on Mary Lamb, for if she knew you so esteem the precious books of her precious Charles, you will find no favor in her eyes, seeing she is all woman, and mother woman to boot, and Charles is not solely her brother; he is likewise her baby). But my folio of "The Anatomy of Melancholy" is ragged leather, gnawed at by Time's old and crumbling teeth, as it were, but never "filthy." That word is undeniably rude and not fitting to a man calling on a lady; and I opine Robinson was finical and a little upish and knew not the difference between the wear which scholars give and love to give a book and the fine new suit which such affect as love not books but know enough to want them around for appearance sake (which last is praiseworthy and not to be underrated). This volume will entice Elia without a doubt, and hence I will watch him furtively truly and not patently; but the watch shall be on him with never a breath of intermission. And besides, my folio Burton

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

has the magic date “1676” and the colophon asserts: “Printed at the signe of the Logg in Cornhill over against ye Royal Exchange.” The smell is subtle and insinuating. I will watch Elia while he filches in my library.

Then in my library is another book—a stately folio which when Elia sees he will clutch at with all his nervous energy and will kiss it (“in a way scarcely discernible” as Barry Cornwall has seen him do), for it is a Beaumont and Fletcher dated 1679. My noble folio of Beaumont and Fletcher is that same noble folio edition of 1679 as Elia himself owned and lugged home, as has been told about with such reminiscent freshness in “Old China”; and the volume is about as long as himself. A body who loves Elia may well monologize as to my feelings when after long waiting and keen scrutiny of every English old book list through many years, I found me a possessor of a folio Beaumont and Fletcher, and when I hold with nervous delight to the fact the Charles Lamb’s folio and mine were the same date, 1679, then, staid though I am, I held a book-dance around this same library. The book worms gnawing solemnly through some of my ancient tomes had dizzy spells and thought some ancient clerk was on a drunk, though that surmise deterred not their solemn and inedifying banquet.

Now it might be thought that since Elia’s folio of Beaumont and Fletcher and mine are of

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

the same date, he will not be covetous. But, reader, trust not that logic. It is impeccable logic; but all logic loses apprehension and conclusion when a booklover has his eyes and his hands on a treasure trove. He has in such an instance no sense. He is a sense-vacuum. He will lust after a volume which has excited his ardor though he have twenty of the same. Do I not know this same dreary, irrepressible book-passion? Nay, this lust for books is like dipsomania. It has no statute of limitation, and is held in leash by no counsels of sobriety. Elia handles this book of mine furtively; but he cannot filch the book furtively. It is his size; and if he lug it off, I shall be strangely unwaried if I see not twin Lambs going from my Library.

Lamb's Beaumont and Fletcher is now a staid resident of the British Museum, where it will remain world without end; and yet I know well enough that Elia himself would odds rather I had it or some like me than that, in that grotto of reliques, his folio should be shoaled.

I gloat over this 1679 folio.

### BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER'S TRAGEDIES 1679

so reads the scroll on the back of the book as I lug the volume around the study in a hopelessly

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

imbecile way, for which I pray I may be pardoned by such as have no such fallacy in their behavior. Howbeit I little care what such think or say or how "they swinny at me" (as tangled Lear would say), seeing I am booklover which they are not and I have the Beaumont and Fletcher folio of 1679, which they have not. They may grimace as they will. I shall not look up from the precious volume to see them.

Truly, Elia, I have all sorts of fear when thou art in this same library of mine. "Night Fears" of which thou hadst so many and didst speak of so knowingly, are inconsequential to my fears when thou art fingering these folios of mine. I fear thee much; but I will eye thee as Saul eyed David which was, as the record reads, "From that day forward."

These volumes which hold these essays of Elia are as modestly dight as Elia, though not in black as his binding was. These essays of his are clad in half calf of rich yellow, with sides burned in faded gold; and pleasant are they to the touch as I hold them furtively in my coat pocket as I walk to the car or hang right valiantly to a strap with the one hand and as valiantly to Elia with the other, though this is a secret matter, the book being in my pocket, and the passengers' only attitude toward me is that they see one straphanger more. The volumes are octavos, just the right size for concealment in the pocket. A book should either be over

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

large or under large. The middle sized books are indefensible. A folio compels respect; a little book wins love. Shakespeare is good in folio or octavo. Lamb should never be in folio. He must never be put in a bulky volume. This propriety is not observed in a certain American edition—which but for that is admirably done. Elia is too cozy, too neighborly, and must be let sit in small corners where we may sit close. These two volumes of Elia whose advent into my library or pocket I celebrate are done by the Chiswick Press, printed on handmade paper and are set up in small types and furnished with introduction by Augustine Birrell, and each book is supplied with three pictures, etchings by Herbert Railton, and are plainly etched out of his heart in love of Elia and are truly pictures of The Cloister of Christ's Hospital, Mackery End, The Temple Church (with the doves clouding a sky ready to flock to the windows of the Lord's house as the scripture saying is), Old Blackesware House, The Tombs in the Abbey, and An Old China Closet.

The thickness of these volumes of Elia is symmetrical, not bulky; for the books are scant three hundred pages. The head and tail pieces are daintily conceived and artistically wrought. Elia would have been lured by such alluring books as these; and were he here, he should have these as gift from me. Though I love them so, yet truly I love him more so.

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

This is my fifth reading *in toto* of Elia's Essays, if my memory plays me no pranks. My first reading was from volumes in a college library, and from the same college library where I had my first reading of DeQuincy. I was a lad; but Elia's quaintness won my heart. Even then I knew him for one of the immortals, at least for one of my immortals. Then afterward when college days summoned me no longer with morning bell to study or to pray, I bought me The Works of Charles Lamb in one inert volume. Here were poems and "Rosamond Gray" and "Old Dramatists" and the like—all Lamb's shadow cast on the street under the sun. The book was mine, bought, I think I said, not purloined, not borrowed; bought with cash won by the sweat of my face—sixty cents of cash and much more of sweat. The volume was scurvy, truly. I always knew that; but it had the quips, the tears unshed, the sidelong looking of his eyes, the savor of the roast suckling pig cleaving to my fingers as to the fingers of Bobo very long since, when houses were burned down to roast one peevish suckling pig. I have the book and love it yet. It has been my friend; and no good man forgets his friends.

My third reading was in what I set store by, the four-volume edition of Lamb's works issued by Edward Moxon in 1850, and called by a certain book-lover and book-collector, "The Beautiful Edition." The editor is Talfourd. And all

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

of Lamb's writings (then known) including prose, poetry or epistle, are here along with an appreciative life of him. Talfourd and Moxon were among the literary executors of their friend Lamb; and it is easy to perceive that in Talfourd he had a warm and generous heart to perform the gracious task of being first biographer. Much as succeeding editors have flouted this first collection of Lamb's letters and writings, we may say that their animadversions are ungracious. The work was admirably and admirably accomplished. Some things must wait for a complete statement. Fugitives of verse or prose whose habitat was in ephemeral magazines must bide their time of discovery.

This Moxon is the Edward Moxon, Lamb's friend of many years, publisher, as we have seen, of Lamb's *Album Verses*, and was himself writer of poetry (but not enough poetry to hurt) concerning which many happy letters passed between these semi-poet friends. This is that Edward Moxon who published the world-famous Rogers's *Italy* and Rogers's *Poems* with illustrations by Stothard, Turner, and Prout—books so beautiful as that to be possessed of the first edition when the plates were all but artist proofs is to count oneself happy (I am so possessed). This was that Edward Moxon who married the ward of Charles and Mary Lamb, Miss Isola, whose receiving a watch from her betrothed lover, Edward Moxon, has elicited the most charming

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

letter in all these epistles (this person being judge). This is that Edward Moxon who jointly with Talfourd was left guardian of poor Mary Lamb in her demented evening of life, when she survived her idolized Charles for sixteen years, though she knew not she survived him a day, her mind and heart being blank page or near so. Thus what had else broken her dear heart passed like a drowsy winter day.

This is that Edward Moxon to whom Lamb willed his library, and which Moxon did not care for with such carefulness as had been creditable to his heart and head. Possibly this word of extenuation, in part, of his fault should be dropped, that it was doubtless thought not delicate to appropriate the books while sister Mary was still living. But meantime, one by one the books had been more or less dispersed; and at the last, besides some volumes given by Moxon to some of Lamb's dearest friends, the remainder of that quaint library was dispersed, sold at auction, and came to be the property of an American who had been a fast lover of Elia in life and death as America has been from the first.

My fourth reading was in the latest collection of his works in which nothing is omitted he is thought to have written. Every crumb is picked up and put upon the table.

My fifth reading has been from the books told of in this narrative. The poetry of things

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

has had its way this my fifth time with Elia. Though myself must bear the joint opprobrium of being finical with books, I would not have these Elia's essays changed, even by the change of colophon. They are as they are, suitable, quiet, comforting. I will seek no further. Elia, so far as touches him and his quiet words, I have gotten home.

And I have read his essays where Elia wrote them, in the busy city clang, full of city voices. He was as truly city man as Dr. Johnson. He knew nothing else nor wished anything else. He was not boisterous nor incisive in his city preference, but was a settled and remorseless Londoner. London was his life, his home, his cradle, and his grave. He never thought to leave it till he died. City man was quiet Elia. Strangely we say this of him, for he was all for quiet and in nothing obstreperous or uproarious. Little as he is, he may not sing or bluster upon the common thoroughfare, though for all I doubt not that had occasion demanded, Charles Lamb could and would have done as brave and chivalrous a deed as his little father whose story is so plaintively and beautifully writ in *The Old Benches of the Inner Temple*. "He was a man of incorrigible and losing honesty, a good fellow withal, and would strike in the cause of the oppressed and never consider inequalities, or calculated the number of his opponents. He once wrested a sword out of the hand of a man

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

of quality who had drawn it and pummeled him with it. The swordsman had offered insult to a female—an occasion upon which no odds against him could have prevented the interference of Lovel."

In his Essays is the same cloistered soul who dwelt in past times and who studied quiet. Yet who can answer for the reason of any man? As a man is, he is. His contradictions are his riches, not his blame. So I read Elia's Essays in the noisy city where two millions of inhabitants set themselves every day to toil and song and serious intent. On street car, on steam car, in railroad station, anywhere the city tumults sounded loudest, there I read city Elia. Some books had best be read in the country. There read "Lorna Doone"; there read "As You Like It"; there, best read "Dreamthorpe"; there read Spenser's "Shepheardes Calender," and I think too his "Faerie Queene." But where the throng surges and the beggars wait and the policeman calls, "Move along, there!" there read the Essays of Elia. So have I done. In nothing have I omitted what seemed to me the civilities and amenities of Cousin Elia. As he would be read, so have I read him, amidst the throng and myself at toil as hard as any man sweats under in all the city's toiling breadth and length. Having so considered all the amenities of Elia, what denies me privilege to animadvert on Elia a little space?

On the back of one of my satisfactory Elias,

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

where the name of the author is printed, "Charles Lamb," the attrition of fingers has worn away the "Lamb," so that the author's name is stamped in gold as "Charles." Withal how fittingly. If that name were all, would anybody who knew the story of English literature hesitate in deciding what Charles it was? Save Charles Dickens, what competitor have we for Charles Lamb? But men, contemporaries of the novelist, always named him "Charles Dickens" or "Boz" or "Dickens," but not "Charles." "Dickens" they called him, but not "Charles." We are not schooled to speak of Elia as "Lamb." I would not think of calling that gentle shadow by such name. It would be a profanation. But "Elia," that would be correct, or "Charles." He would answer to that; for so Mary called him. "Brother Charles." Essays of Elia, by Charles—how fitting that would be! Fingers of readers and handlers do play some scurvy tricks, though not so with this Elia book. They wrought with as poetic result as though they had been weavers of tapestry.

Oliver Goldsmith died in 1774; Charles Lamb was born in 1775. Goldsmith was buried in the graveyard of the Temple Church, a region so continuously dear to Charles. Those two spirits, who had been more congenial as I believe than any to whom either was congenial in either's lifetime, never caught sight of each other's face; and what a pity! Sam Johnson died in 1784 and

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

Charles Lamb was born in 1775; so that when Elia was a lad of nine the great, true soul of Johnson marched out into the night. Had they met, it is scarcely doubtful what reception Lamb had been accorded by Dictator Sam Johnson. "Goldy" had hard enough time with this irascible sovereign of literature. Charles Lamb had in all probability fared worse, I truly fear. Carlyle was splenetic enough with Elia. What the rabid Greatheart lexicographer had been we may more than dimly guess. Yet I have placed these in juxtaposition, not of time solely, but mainly of character; for big, bluff, pock-scarred Sam Johnson, with his uncertain eyesight and vociferative speech, and little, stammering, spring-shouldered Charles Lamb have more in common in character than any two authors we may conveniently name. They were two men, under-scoring the word *men*. They two had bigness of heart enough to have stocked up a whole generation of authors. They are the two best-loved authors from the eighteenth century.

This is a queer thing, this faculty of these two men to put the after days in love with them. To put people in love with oneself, is, anyway, a supreme faculty, better, far better than all besides. To be greatly loved is beyond measure better than to be greatly admired. To educe an instance: Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a fellow charity student with Charles Lamb, and probably Lamb's truest friend as he was Coleridge's truest

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

friend, is brilliant. He is ever like a meteoric shower and oftentimes like a play of astral lights, and not infrequently radiant as a conjunction of suns midway of the heavens. His *obiter dicta*, dismembered fragments of conversations on far-going orbits of thought, have given him a calm immortality. But although his views were brilliant and his insight profound and his expression facile and his sympathies alert to the largest thinkings of the soul, to whom does it ever occur to love him? Really, the idea is ridiculous. His wife had to give over the cumbersome task. Yet here is found a man who could have been put in one of the lobes of Coleridge's brain and have made no appreciable congestion, who stammered his way into the loves of men so as to be a member of the household of everybody's heart. How can these things be? To which is no answer vouchsafed, save the fact, which fact abides.

Nor was this love-provoking power because of perfection in Charles Lamb. Faults he had and sins. He was occasional drunkard. He has lifted a piteous drunkard's cry in his essay on a drunkard which is as wise as Bacon's essay on "Atheism," and makes as good a temperance appeal as Oliver Wendell Holmes's witty emendation of the Bacchanal's praise of wine, written in *The Autocrat*. The express words are: "But is there no middle way between total abstinence and the excess which kills you? For your sake, reader, and that you may never attain to my

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

experience, with a pain I must utter the dreadful truth that there is none, none that I can find"; and "Life itself, my waking life, has much of the confusion, the trouble, and obscure perplexity of an ill dream. In the daytime I stumble on dark mountains." Yet is he loved—dearly loved—and shall be against all tomorrows.

Robert Browning appeals to me as being as perfect an all-round character of poet and man of literary passion as has ever lived. If anyone were to say he was without faults as a man, we will not contradict him. Charles Lamb was of another order. Whimsical, sometimes befuddled by rum and oftentimes by his own jests; not valorously Christian, yet so persistently human, so graciously tender, so doggedly and unconsciously heroic, so possessed of the instinct of motherhood and so given over to the practice of it, so full of quaint conceits, so neighborly to kindness, so fond of his own laden as they were with shortcomings, so little given to complaint, so homely and homelike, so much a lover of trifles, so unschooled in prudence, so good a friend to tie to, so queer, so deliciously queer—Charles Lamb has walked into hearts whose doors he has found wide open for him and sunny with welcome. He has been dead only seventy years. We can almost touch him as he passes to the East India house or makes his blithe way homeward when the business day is spent. Then he seemed somewhat a figure of

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

the mist. Now he seems not more so, though the London fogs he loved and lived in do in some manner fold him about and will do so always.

I have read various biographies of Charles Lamb, the latest being by Lucas, in two volumes, bulking almost as great as Charles himself. And with deference to his biographers, I have not had much information at their hands. This I set down not as fault of theirs nor as surliness in me, but that I hold the true biographer of Charles Lamb is Cousin Elia. His Essays of Elia are the book of Charles Lamb's life. He is ever reminiscent, ever autobiographical, which some set down to egotism; and the wiseacres reproach Milton with writing so noble prose about himself, but do not in so doing increase their wisdom. Those stalwart self-illuminating passages are worth whole libraries of other people's cogitations. I go back and read them, those stately self-revelations of Milton, time and time again, though I have read his theology but once, and that once quite sufficed. The oak reports its history in all its bole and balm and acorn in the cup and battle arm and wideness and depth of shadow full of rest and comforting great peace.

Ruskin's "Praeterita" and Newman's "Apologia pro Sua Vita" are the flower of the writings of those two poetical literary artists. If I mistake not, this is the real fascination of the essay as

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

a literary form—that it is an expression of opinion, always an expression of opinion. So that in reading anybody's essays you are coming onto the real person. His every word is a word about himself. "Thus I feel, thus I think, thus I love, thus I mistrust, thus I hold preference"—"Thus I." Not the unbearable "I" of egotism but the "I" of self-expression. Thus the morning-glories talk of themselves. Their bloom is auto-biographical. Elia's Essays are Elia at flower. They are he. His shadow is not more his own nor so much. Everything is Eliaized when it comes to us through these breathings against the pane. Trees exude balsam; and whosoever would come upon the life secret of the tree must give heed to the balsam. So are these Elia essays fragrance, bloom, shadow, balsam from the spirit of Charles Lamb. Reading them is reading Lamb's secret soul. As we love him we must love them. And we may not lightly schedule what weight of this world-interest in these now immortal essays is attributable to themselves and what to the dear heart who penned them. We read the letters of those we love not as seeking literary surprises nor values, but as watching the tendrils of their lives aspire and twine. We love them so that what they said is fragrant as the summer morn, just as we keep the scribbling of a child in its first letter to Santa Claus, keep and treasure and kiss, from heart reasons which are always wiser than head reasons. Personally

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

I am always hunting Charles Lamb through what he writes.

And what he writes in letters is not to me so conclusively self-exponential as his essay forms. I confess to the belief, after careful reading of all his letters which to date have been collated, that we had not lost over much had they not seen the light. We know him scarcely, if any, better after them than we had by his essays. We read the letters of him as we pick up the fallen falltime leaf because once it held up against the light and laughter of the day and answered to the beckon of the wind. Its life was hallowed, and its death hallowed. It is a reminiscence. Oak leaf or leaf of cottonwood, as we loved those trees so we love this their remembrancer. Once this cottonwood leaf made minstrelsy of rain all a summer through. We love it for its dead music. Not further than this do the Lamb letters bring me. They are not himself, as seems to me. In the letters I miss the subtle minstrelsy of the essays. This may be a whim, though I think I do not mistake in feeling that the moment Lamb shifted his face from behind his Elia mask he grew timid despite himself. He must be hid as the whippoorwill, to distill sad music. As his early letters are drenched with longing, the call of a lonely soul for friendship, so in a manner are they all. He was a solitary man; but his soul had its cry. He was lonely, but would not be alone. His hand-reach for

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

Coleridge through all the years, but specially through his earlier years, is pathetic as the dusk of autumn evening. But the lightness, the airiness, the gossamer quality I will name it, of Elia, is not, to me, resident in the letters. By them, I mean to say, he had not witched us. We could have escaped their spell. We cannot escape the spell of William Cowper's letters. He would be well on toward the dull sobriety of death who could elude the gentle Cowper's epistolary art. He is a deathless correspondent. I truly believe him to be the most charming letter writer of English literature. He had scantier theme, fewer objects in his room to touch, fewer sights from his window, and yet he has surprised the world of lovers of things exquisitely said so that while epistolary eloquence retains its gentle hold upon the heart, Cowper is immortal. We would omit Cowper's poetry if necessity commanded; but his letters, no dreary necessity shall seize from our hands. Like a child with its picture book holden fast in the hands when the child is dead asleep, so shall we be with Cowper's letters. They are his Elia essays. Not so with Lamb. His letters take charm from him rather than from themselves. We will forgive Time if he, in his burly goings, drops these letters from his wallet: but he must not drop the musings of Elia, for should he do so distraught a thing, we shall collar this wight of many years and bid him, in no uncer-

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

tain tone, go back and fetch what he had no call to lose. Time must be sent back along his path hunting lost Elias.

Thus all roads, with my thinking, lead back to these drowsing essays over which nobody drowses, these minor chords to which a body may weep gently or smile softly. They are Elia; Elia is they. In my hand is this Elia book, and in my hand I carry Elia like a pressed flower. I will hold this in my hand as in his time he held the hand of Mary of the murky mind.

Gentle Elia, thou goest as thou wilt and we with thee. Stammer a word now and then that we may know the way thou takest, Elia, quaint Elia, frail Elia, brave Elia, immortal Elia!

A chronological display of the Lamb lucubrations may be instructive. Here it is: 1796, "Sonnets of Coleridge and Lamb"; 1798, "Blank Verse of Charles Lloyd and Charles Lamb"; 1798, "A Tale of Rosamund Gray"; 1802, "The Tragedy of John Woodville"; 1806, "Mr. H," a Farce. This was the play performed at Drury Lane Theater in December of 1806 and which elicited from the Theatrical Examiner this paragraph: "Mr. H—, thou wert DAMNED. Bright shone the morning on the playbills that announced thy appearance: and the streets were filled with the buzz of persons asking one another if they would go to see Mr. H— and answering that they would certainly; but before night the gaiety, not of the author, but of his friends and the

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

town was eclipsed; for thou wert DAMNED." This is the play at which Lamb joined right lustily with the audience in hissing the play. Than this I know nothing more like this quaint child-man, Elia. Watch him jeering his own farce and love him. Who can do that is very much the man. Whether mirth or tears are chief ingredients of that scene, I for one cannot determine. Let it pass.

Among all the playwrights a body can think of, Browning could take the apathy and phlegm of an audience watching his "Blot in the 'Scutcheon'" stoically and carelessly; but that he should have been competent to hiss himself with a hissing crowd is more than doubtful. Elia, thou wast ever near neighbor to tears or smiles or madness.

1807, "Tales from Shakespeare" (of which Lamb wrote six); 1808, "Specimens of English Dramatic Poets Who Lived About the Time of Shakespeare" (Longmans); 1809, "Mrs. Leicester's School" (of which Lamb wrote but three histories); 1806-11, "Adventures of Ulysses" (published by M. J. Goodwin in The Juvenile Library; 1809, "Poetry for Children," "two tiny volumes," of which Lamb, according to his own account in his correspondence, wrote one third, there being in all 144 pages, including title and contents. These volumes were republished in America (without the knowledge of Lamb so far as known) in Boston in the year 1812, in one volume; 1811, "Prince Dorus"; 1818, "The Works of Charles Lamb," published by C.

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

and J. Ollier in two volumes about the thickness of Lamb's writing finger; 1823, "Elia. Essays which have appeared under that signature in the London Magazine"; 1828, "The Intruding Widow," published in Blackwood's; 1830, "Pawnbroker's Daughter," in The Blackwood's; 1830, Lamb's "Album Verses" (Moxon); 1833, "Last Essays of Elia."

1833 is the date of the closing publication of Lamb's lifetime. So with Elia, endeth Elia. In this, his vineyard lent all its clusters to be squeezed to pulp. In "The Works of Charles Lamb," as issued by the Olliars in 1818, was a comparatively trivial amount of substance; but in "The Complete Works of Charles Lamb," issued by Chatto and Windus in 1901, is a volume of eight hundred and fifty pages, small type, bulking about as vast as Shakespeare; but with all preinclination to Lamb, I think a body must calmly say, after reading in leisure and love every word received from the dawdling pen of this book-keeper of this long ago, that "The Essays of Elia" subtracted, little remains which unprinted, had left reader-folk impoverished. If Lamb set serious store by his eight sonnets published in collaboration with Coleridge, we cannot take them so seriously. The blank verse published in collaboration with Charles Lloyd urges the same estimate. His dramas are mainly worthy to be kept alive because they are footprints of our quaint friend. The "Poetry for Children" had best have been let

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

alone to slumber in a forgotten corner with forgotten children as Lamb himself let it be in his works in 1818, where he reprinted but three pieces. His judgment was accurate. The disappearance of these two tiny volumes of "Poetry for Children" for a half century of total oblivion is one other romantic page in the romantic story of authorship. Totally lost and as totally forgotten, certain poems would lift like bubbles to the surface through Milius and others till, in 1877, from Adelaide, Australia, came back to England the two tiny mementoes of the brother and sister authors. The publication of this literary discovery brought to light the volume published in the United States. The serious search for such waifs is interesting but not instructive and pays tribute to the love which holds us all to gentle Elia, and is tribute to the affections of him who with such persistent love hunted out those cobwebs of a path of yesterday. But they were not worth recovery. The dictum of a Lamb-lover, "The work of Lamb is too precious to let any of it be lost," as this writer believes, is inadmissible. The collecting tatters torn from the shabby garments of some opulent body is scarcely worth the while. The immortalities of an immortal are the items worthy to have standing in the catalogue of an immortal's activities and lucubrations. Save only the ballad, "To a River in which a Child was Drowned," we may frankly doubt whether anything worth while the fame of Lamb is contained in these child

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

poems. Hero-worship aside, the child poems of Riley or Stevenson are their easy superiors.

Aside from Sonnet I as Lamb originally wrote it, as it appeared in his Works in 1818, and not as it was printed in the Coleridge-Lamb volume, we may be permitted to doubt whether any of Lamb's sonnets need to stay; and "The Album Verses" would not have been missed had they remained in the albums in which they were originally written. "Thekla's Song," as Lamb originally translated it from Schiller and not as himself revised it ("Works of Charles Lamb" in 1818), is a spirited contribution to translations. But if we retain the dreamy poem of loss and longing entitled "Hester," in one Lamb-lover's opinion we shall have all the poetry the fame of Elia absolutely demands retaining. And if the sad "Tale of Rosamund Gray" be kept to tremble in the hand at reading, his other tales, in verse or prose, may be let wander out alone whither they will.

The retention of literary memorabilia which decreases rather than increases an author's fame, may be set down as disfavor rather than favor to an author. Let such things in authorship as can die, die; because the immortal things of him will refuse the courtesy of death.

The heart of the oak, then, in Lamb's compositions, must be affirmed to be Elia. To Elia we all come back like children coming home. 1823 to 1833, from Elia, to Last Essays

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

of Elia is the pregnant decade of authorship to gentle Elia. All else may vanish like a cloud and his fame be not diminished. These know not evanishment. These will persist in blooming like violets under southern skies, all the year through, and beyond—all the years through. All other things his clerk hand wrote were written in delible ink: these “Elias” were writ in indelible ink and are like the brilliant colors on mediæval parchments, as bright to-day as when nigh a thousand years ago some fond scribe made the pages glow with his laborious and loving hand.

Now shall it be un-Elialike for me to set down that this quotation as about to be set down is taken from a page a trifle yellow and sedate, like Elia’s self. A page of the first edition of Elia printed in 1823. This book belongs to me (though I desire to forbear boasting), come by honestly though with expenditure of more cash than pleases me to think of, which sum would make Elia shake the head if he should know about it, though this sense of money-loss in book-gain brings me quaintly close to Elia himself. The title of the volume as heretofore set down on these yellow pages’ colophon:

LONDON:  
Printed for Taylor and Hessey,  
Fleet Street

1823

256

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

The book's pages have an ancient smell like an old wardrobe. I inhale such fragrance and am satisfied. I seem to walk beside this gentle gentleman. "Fleet Street!" Truly this is where he walked so often and loved so inveterately and where he used to hang over book stalls forgetful of all haste. This book and the possession of it please me immoderately, the possession as much as the book. When I was discoursing with my pocket about the purchase of this reminiscent volume it is vain that I said in economic dialogue: "Any other copy reads as well. Is not this in any Elia book? Why spend money for that which is not bread? Be content with having all Elia said, written in books not a few, already in this library." To these remarks wise beyond question, my Pocket ejaculated, "Bravo, well said"; and finally as to bring me, I being a religious man and a minister and given to Bible phrase, my Pocket gave vent to a good round "SELAH." But no number of pocket plaudits could persuade me. I hung around that first edition of Elia. I left it for days together and then drew toward it again. The magnet had its way with me. My pocket gave a groan and spake some words not greatly complimentary to me, saying, as I gathered, something about being unequally yoked and something further the sense of which I could not entirely gather, about fools and their money being soon parted; but I heeded not. This first

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

Elia was in my hand; and who could say it had not been in the hand of Elia himself? And my hand held it tight as it does now this day of writing as I sit by the gray southern winter sea and hear the sea gulls whine; and the sky swishes into the brackish pool of the wide ocean; and the sky and the sea and the day are as gray as Fleet Street—and Elia. And so I wander with Elia in his whimsical journey, for I have this first Elia safe in my hand by the gray sea under the gray sky.

“I am ill at dates,” Elia is stuttering. Dates are an almanac’s strong point; but who reads an almanac for refreshment? Ill at dates is he often, even when he is not overcome with drink, but good at remembering names of people he loved and good at loving people whose names his heart had committed to memory—which is far better. Dates may any day be had from a cyclopædia; but the blush is only to be had on the fresh-blooming rose.

In some of his letters Lamb smiles at his writings issued in 1818 and called “THE WORKS OF CHARLES LAMB.” And when a body sees these same two volumes so yclept, and marks how thin they be, thin as Sir Andrew Aguecheek, he may laugh a little too. They seem more like the play of an author than his works, but not the author nor any other besides could have conceived that the immortality of him was to be won not by these thin books—these “bookies,”

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

as the Scotchman with his charm of diminutives would put it—but by thoughts which yet brooded in the brain as the East India House accountant went by every foggy morn and evening—walking into immortality. Elia was yet to be. The reason why these thinlets are remembered is because they were predecessors of real works, the genuine strivings of a spirit who sits among authors quite solitary—and quite beyond the pathos of being forgot. Lamb's Works is precursor to unforgetable ELIA who is as his player: “A glimpse of understanding would appear in a corner of his eye and for lack of fuel go out again.” “A part of his forehead would catch a little intelligence, and be a long time in communicating it to the remainder.” “He seemed to keep back his intellect.” Spake this author of another or of himself: Say you, my Friend, in essence, Elia always spoke only of himself. His writings are the dew which his atmosphere deposited. How gentle is the dew!

The item of most interest to this writer in Lucas's “Life of Lamb” is the catalogue of his books; and no inconsiderable part of this interest is excited by what the library did not possess. It was a list of exclusions. This library, like its owner, was mainly rich in exclusions. Elia loved what he loved. Say that and say all. He loved as he loved, nor gave you reason for his affection. Every library is to be valued in proportion as it is somewhat other libraries are

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

not. In purchasing, through happy years, books from libraries whose owners are now writ down as "The late Mr.," the triteness of many book collections ministers to disgust. Truly, that a man collected a library at all is in his favor, yet how unworthy a book-man that his purchases should be mainly from the chronic sellers of *de luxe* editions—the peripatetic book stores which tell men what to buy. The way to buy books is to go out after what you want as people look for the flowers they love. Not to have the library shape the man, but the man to shape the library, is the ideal of the owner and the book. Some libraries sold at auction are open doors to a beatitude. They are so unusual, so frankly self-confessional. Such library-makers know in themselves what library they want and do not leave it to the vagaries of wandering chance or wandering book agent (which things are synonymous). The comparatively scant company of books in any library which have the *ex libris* not of the book plate but the plain *ex libris* of the mentality which took delight in gathering these books about him—this is THE LIBRARY. Any other is a collection of ditto marks. Let me into the secret lobes of a book-man's brain by his special quest in books, and I will rest content.

Elia is rather steeped in an atmosphere than in books. He inhaled not a library but an alcove of a library. You could not budge him. He was

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

adamant. His whimsey held him fast. An atmosphere two centuries older than himself, he breathes; and we rebreathe in him. He was dovetailed into the past. That past and he were so interfused as that you could not tell which was past and which was Elia. He was as quaint as an ancient heirloom. A man of business for years and not immethodical either, he impresses us as if he had never once seen a business street. Worldly-wise, a bookkeeper is assumed to be; but this particular bookkeeper is as unworldly-wise as if single and double entry had never crossed hands with him. He was as impractical as the soil which grows the woodland flowers. He is not at loggerheads with business, but is simply unconscious that business has any counter or ships or machinery. Possibly—yea, even probably—this is main part of his charm in a worldly era, that one man was so unworldly, so brother to old Burton and his “Anatomy of Melancholy,” so strait a friend to the irrelevant and inconsequent, the unsought-for and the forgotten. He gathers as treasures what nobody else wants, and thrusts away as useless what the main mass of mankind are frenzied to get hands on. Elia is no brother of Mr. Worldly Wiseman in Bunyan’s assemblage of souls. “Brother Unworldly Wiseman,” and Elia, looking for the old English dramatists in which he is making quotations, would say with an absent air, “I think ye spake my name, brother.” One

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

man has come to stay among us whose business is to be unbusinesslike.

Elia's limitations are a distinct contribution to his charm. He is in nothing Napoleonic. The huge wearies his faculties. He yearns for the lesser. The sea outrages his meadow boundaries. He is scantily given to the infinities. His sensibilities are domesticated. His wildness is tamed like a panther cub. "*The Old Margate Hoy*" will sound his shallowness of sea. "I am fond of passing my vacations at one or the other of the universities. Next to these my choice would fix me in some woody spot . . . on the banks of my beloved Thames." Inland on the quiet meadow or inland by the quiet river, now we have Cousin Elia. Neither mountain nor sea is necessity for his landscape. Speaking more absolutely to his feelings, sea and mountain troubled him. Shorelessness nor climbing altitude appeased his spirit. His was an inland faculty. The Columbus trait hovered not over his cradle nor his manhood's habitation. A sea voyage appealed neither to his stomach nor his character half so sincerely as the man on board who was "the greatest liar I had met with then or since," who was "an insuppressible volubility of assertion." "He was none of your hesitating half-story-tellers . . . but one who committed downright daylight depredations upon his neighbor's faith. He did not stand hesitating upon the brink but was a hearty, thorough-paced liar and plunged at once into the

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

depths of your credulity.” The lad on board was of a different metal from Elia. “His eye was ever on the sea with a smile. The waves whispered to him more pleasant stories. He was as one being with us but not of us . . . and when we asked him whether he had any friends where he was going he replied he had no friends.” This lad was true kinsman of the sea. Howbeit this is not Elia. His loneliness is oceanic I doubt not, but he will never think of it under such similitude. “But the sea remains a disappointment” is not hearsay from others, but a home voice of Elia’s self. The “sumless treasures swallowed up in the unrestoring depths” are not our Elia’s treasures, nor is “the commensurate antagonist of the earth” Elia’s partisan. Elia is not “under the tyranny of a mighty faculty which haunts him with confused hints and shadows” of the sea, for to him what is the sea “more than the widening of the river mouth”? “I love town or country . . . I require woods.” “While I gaze upon the sea I want to be on it, over it, across it. It binds me with chains as of iron. I should not feel so in Staffordshire.” He likes the smuggler as he loves not the sea. “I like a smuggler. He is the only honest thief. He robs nothing but the revenue—an abstraction I never greatly cared for.” “Nature where she does not mean us for mariners and vagabonds bids us stay at home. The salt foam seems to nourish a spleen. I am not half so good-natured as by the milder waters of my natural

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

river. I would exchange these sea gulls for swans and scud a swallow forever on the banks of Thamesis." Now, how absolute is the charm of this naïve confession! He is all for home and nothing for far wandering. He and old Ulysses cannot patch up a friendship, even had they each a pipe whose blue smoke ascending is said to conduce to peace.

Elia was as irrelevant as Oliver Wendell Holmes. What more of tribute to his irrelevancy could be paid? In his own whimsical phrase of self-explication: "Narrative teases me. I have little gladness in the progress of events." "Out-of-the-way humors of opinion, heads with some diverting twist in them, the oddities of authorship, please me most." Himself we know, and care for Elia as he is. There he is a tower of strength. "Heads with some diverting twist in them"—truly Elia has come into possession of one of those same heads, and in this consideration may put us all at ease with Elia's vagabondage of matter and manner. In him, those things please us most. He said things as they happened. He was not stereotyped. He was not even set up in type. He wandered on making music like a brook. What he wanted to talk of, that was his theme. His fancy haunted where he had been. He was never far afield. Only once did he go to the continent of Europe; and, happily, the exodus did not walk into his abstractions. He did not take the journey seriously. His writings all taste of

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

the cask that held them. A new cask had made his liquor common. We do not care where Elia was nor whom he met. That is an irrelevance to us. Our sole consideration is that Elia himself was present and that his whimsical humor caught the momentary guest by the cloak. We look not at the guest's face nor at his cloak, being intent on looking at the quiet, twinkling eyes of Brother Charles.

Where Lamb starts is no more sign of where he will go than the direction of a stream is a certificate of its destination. Let stream and Elia wander on as they will, so be we may unawares wander with them. "Methought" is the contagious surprise in these vaticinations, warblings, musings, fantasies, conjurings, standings-still or lazyings-along—these,—call them as you will, but be they always the moods and tenses of a spirit half shadow and half sun. "Methought," that suffices. But no sooner said than the methought must be jostled aside by an interlude of "What wild things dreams are!" And Elia is in the neighborhood of these wild things, these quiet incomprehensibles, his dreams. But break his thread he will. Doubt him not. He will not keep steady, straight on his way for long. He will loiter aside for something—the gossipings of the angels shall beguile him or the biography of his vagabond thoughts may be set down in his words touching other matters. "Whence it came, or how it came, or how bid it come, or whether it came purely of its own

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

head, neither you nor I know.” What an adequate biography that is of our inconsequent Elia’s musings! But so they come, we shall with gladness be content. He is as full of “little, lawless azure-tinctured grotesques” as ever a china closet was. “When I go to the great house.” And, honestly, that was not often? You and the great houses were not fast fraters were you, in smiling truth? The Charter House school, you were its citizen do I recall, and were at home there if not welcome there! But great houses? But Blakesmore House? Yes, I stand corrected. Your aunt, was it; or nearer ancestress? But what odds? Is not this Elia, and would he haggle over a nearer or remoter link of consanguinity? “Your aunt,” leave her relationship at this negation point. Aunts do not count. They are our mother’s or our father’s relatives, not ours. Bethink, where was I? But what is that to this present issue? Are we not out with Elia, and was ever Elia tied to one dooryard when his pen was in his clerical right hand with scribbler’s intent? But was it of your aunt I had opinion when this series of tergiversations beset my wits? Even so or near so or more so. Let that be as it may. “That’s the humor of it,” as says brave Corporal Nym—“that’s the humor of it.” We are trailing like vagrant smoke out after fickle Elia. Let be. We must go as we will. Consecutiveness of mood or tense is no part of our grammar now. This is plainly a grammar, not

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

of assent, as Newman wrote, but a grammar of Elia, a grammar of consent or dissent or descent, but never any scent for long. Friend Elia! "H-h-he-here," stammers our rhythmic conversationalist Elia; if he be not "there" instead of "here" we shall, may chance, find his whereabouts if we hasten; but we must not hasten. Elia never hastens save he be called by the pleading heartache-voice of Mary, "Charles, Brother Charles!" Then is he only swift alacrity. But we move toward the stammering voice. Where were we? But is that to this point? Not Where were we? but Where are we? is Elia's query. In Elia's logic where we were is closely disconnected from where we now are. We are in no wise bound to be dully wandering in our own track. We will come on as we may and come out as we may, Elia-wise. But thine aunt, Elia, was of Blakesmore House, old Blakesmore House? She was some grand dame of stately face and rich brocade? Thou art by thine ancient aunt, high-born, queer Elia? "Ye-e-s-s-s," stammers truthful Elia (truthful when put in a quiet corner). "My aunt was h-h-house-k-k-keeper." Well said, Elia. Your aunt is a stately housekeeper at Blakesmore House and you were brought up in such aristocracy as occasional visits to a housekeeper aunt could supply. Now, Elia, say little of "When I visit any great house." A once-mentioning, that will amply suffice. "When I go to see any great house I inquire for the china closet, and next for

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

the picture gallery.” So he does. His quips and quiddities follow him close as his meager shadow. He has touch of the feminine with him, ever. Perhaps so it came about he did so good a job of mothering hapless Mary. And if it be so, who of us can ever fault this inflection of the feminine on his nature?

Elia stammers: “This aunt of mine was house-keeper in Blakesmore H-h-ouse.” So all this beautiful vagabondage of little Charles long since in Blakesmore House was the peekaboo of the simple housekeeper’s pale, slender nephew. So has he been in the great houses. The master knew not he was there. He was not even an intruder. He was too inconsequential to intrude. We shall take salt in large pinches when Elia talks to us about when “he goes to great houses.” He was not of them then, but is safely of them now. While he was sojourner beneath this sun he was not thought of by the great for a guest at their houses, but now is he a guest at everybody’s house who aspires to be thought of the wise community of brains and fine feeling. He comes into great houses now, not through the housekeeper’s room, but through the widest door the house swings open at the front. Charles comes in with the illustrious great and is given chief seat at the table. He was not born to such, but has conquered his way into the houses of a race. However, let that pass. We were plucking the sleeve of Elia with our smile on designing to bring him to the

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

ground, where he belonged, and mildly suggest that this talk of his going to great houses must be dealt out sparingly, seeing we were aware of a thing or two ourselves; and Elia with all his slyness and craft cannot deceive us. We too are among the wary and adroit. No great-house talk deceives us wise folk, Elia.

But this is a digression worthy of Elia. We are in all conscience far enough from what we began talking of. Shall we wheel about as the sea birds do to bring them home to shore? By no means. We are not bound to get to shore. We are Elia-izing. We do not retrace to catch a pathway missed. We proceed upon any pathway. We shall, in all reason, come out somewhere if we be relatives of Elia. He began an essay on old china. He called it so. It stays called so. But what has it to do with old china? Well queried. It has nothing or next to nothing to do with china. He holds a teacup in his hand or sips the tea appreciatively and looks at Cousin Bridget—and so farewell to old china or new china or any china. He will now discourse on old times. Wise, wise Elia. That is theme indeed. I think you witful wise to leave talking of china for such sweet digression. Old times are always better than old china. Elia will talk on what Elia will. And who murmurs? Is not that his gift? Cannot a wagon hold to a road and can a wagon with safety leave a road? But skylarks need no roads. They abominate them. They cast not even an

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

ascending glance at roadways. They cleave the sky. They wing along no pathway twice. Shall mind be less free in its journeys than a witless bird at song? Nay, Elia, go as thou wilt. Be vagabond. Leave any highway, cross any byway, leisure along any lane, be expeditious to do that thing all creation beside would not do. So shalt thou still be Elia.

These “Works of Charles Lamb,” first edition, published in London in 1818, I have read very lovingly with unconstrained intent. First, because they are the first edition. Second, because they belong to me; and, third, because they record what Lamb had been had Elia not arrived.

What belongs to a body, he is apt to regard highly, unless it be boils and debts, or some such dramatic impedimenta. (Eheu!) These two precious volumes are mine. They are the first edition. They smell of the year 1818. Who knows but that these, too, may have been in Charles Lamb’s hands? Who knows but he slyly crept into the bookshop and handled his own volume, seeing he was now an author of “Works”! Whoso owned these books gave them scant heed, I fear, seeing they are minus dogsears and scruffing, or thumb mark, or any leaf turned down or any passage penciled to show that such as had these books in possession really cared for them. A second-hand book is always possessed of interest no first-hand book can have. The new book comes fresh from the hands of the printer. He

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

laid hands on it for day's wage and not through any love. The second-hand book we may dream about a little when twilight wanes and darkness climbs the sky. Who had it? Why did he have it? Was he a book collector or booklover? Did he get to have, as boys collect postage stamps? or did he get to read? Was he acquiring a library as a man acquires friends, or did he happen by the book, seeing it was on the second-hand book shelf, purchasable for a song? Or did he love Charles Lamb? All such questions lift like bubbles on the brook when a second-hand book is in one's hands. In these volumes of mine of the year 1818 is no identification mark—no *ex libris*—whether of a bookplate or a leaf edge or any subtle suggestion; but it is mine now. Selah.

I coveted these books until the commandment spoke gruffly to me; but they were for sale; and anybody may covet such belongings religiously. These books played havoc with me, but could not brook my spirit's strivings. I speak not of my arguments with myself touching this bibliophile transaction, but solely say, in modesty howbeit, I own "The Works of Charles Lamb," 1818.

They are bound by Riviere; and I have been known on sundry occasions to buy books solely because this garmenteer of tomes in beauty had his way with them; and these two volumes are clad in rich levant. Heart's blood might have been spilled on them so far as their color might be witness. Could it have been Charles Lamb's

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

heart blood! He was generous with the anguish of his heart. But such items are set down as persiflage. They are less than trivial. These are Charles Lamb's works, and were printed when his fame was a poor candle which even the winds thought too lightly of to blow out. The books are the value—the body, not the garment. If one had a Caxton or a first edition of Shakespeare's Sonnets, though they were bound in gold, chased by some rare craftsman like Benvenuto Cellini, the gold would have been immaterial seeing the books are the superior treasure.

However, to proceed with the internal affairs of these "Works of Charles Lamb." They are not oak. They would not have withstood a wind storm. They would not have been a ship to bear the author on the seas of immortality.

Volume I is dedicated to Coleridge with a "My dear Coleridge: You will smile to see the slender labors of your friend designated by the title 'Works.'"

Volume II is dedicated in a sonnet to Charles Barry. "Hester" is the first voice in the choir, and is the sweetest. The last article in Volume II is "Mr. H, a Farce," from which we may safely infer the conclusion was not worthy the beginning. The works are printed gracefully and are in nothing crude. I think that Charles Lamb's eyes rested on them without censure. But we might have left these volumes on some forgotten bookstand and not have been sorrowful. "Rosalind Gray" is here. The sonnet, edited not as

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

originally bound in the volume of Coleridge, by Lamb, and edited out of idyllic sweetness, appears as Lamb originally penned it and is sweet. The many utterances of criticism are apt and keen, but we could have spared them. What can be spared is not immortal. Here is printed in Volume II recollections of Christ's Hospital to which Elia advertises in his "Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago."

I confess to having more interest in the Eliaeque sketch than for the writing in the Reflector under the hiding of "A Londoner." When the fog thickens round him by the subterfuge of a name not his, he becomes ruminant and confidential in such a manner as was his wont under the twilight of "Elia."

Another item of Eliana I am possessor of which methinks would make anybody laugh out loud, I have reserved unto the last because it is poetry complete this:

THE  
PROSE WORKS  
of  
CHARLES LAMB  
xxx  
In Three Volumes  
Vol. I  
"Rosamund Gray," etc.  
xxx  
LONDON:  
Edward Moxon, Dover Street.  
MDCCXXXVI.

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

So the title page of Volume I runs. Volume II has on the back of the book an Arabic “2” and on the title page a Roman “II” and Volume III has the Roman numerals on both title page and back of the book. Volume “2” has “Elia—First Series.” Volume III has “Last Essays of Elia.” But 1836 is good and early to have the Prose Works of Lamb including the two Elia Series.

This, however, is not the main poetry of these books. I have, as a skillful raconteur, reserved the chief poetry of incident unto the last. On the pre-title page of Volume I is this inscription,

To

Alfred Tennyson, Esq.,  
With the Publisher's  
kind regards.

So here ye have it, ye poet souls who love association volumes; these were Alfred Tennyson's “Elia.” That dear poet has leaned those eyes which saw King Arthur at early dawns and dewy dusks over these pages. What a prince am I to have such treasures under my hand. They have come to stay with this Elia-lover. They shall not, while my eyes can tarry on a page, leave my library; and when I am passed to where the shadows melt into the light I hope my son may love them as his father does. Then shall I be full content.

Now, Lamb was a city lover in all rare abandonment. Socrates, city-man of city men, had paused from arguing, I think, to have taken the

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA.

Londoner, Charles Lamb, by the hand an instant. The city whirl was in the feet of this London pedestrian when, under the shelter of a pseudonym, he has poured out his soul. And when "A Londoner" is exchanged for the more succinct cognomen of "Elia," then did his reticence have way like a quiet water wandering among grasses on a level meadow, too level for brook's laughter—in quiet and sedate self-revelation. The darkness, as of the night, of a secluding name made his garrulity fascinating, immortal.

I was born under the shadow of St. Dunstan's steeple, just where the conflux of the eastern and western inhabitants of this twofold city meet and jostle in friendly opposition at Temple Bar. I was born, as you have heard, in a crowd. This has begot in me an entire affection for that way of life, amounting to an almost insurmountable aversion from solitude and rural scenes. This aversion was never interrupted or suspended, except for a few years in the younger part of my life, during a period in which I had set my affections upon a charming young woman. Every man while the passion is upon him, is for a time at least addicted to groves and meadows and purling streams. During this short period of my existence I contracted just familiarity enough with rural objects to understand tolerably well ever after the poets, when they declaim in such passionate terms in favor of a country life.

For my own part, now the fit is past, I have no hesitation in declaring that a mob of happy faces crowding up at the pit door of Drury Lane Theater, just at the hour of six, gives me ten thousand sincerer pleasures than I could ever receive from all the flocks of silly sheep that ever whitened the plains of Arcadia or Epsom Downs.

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

This passion for crowds is nowhere feasted so full as in London. The man must have a rare recipe for melancholy who can be dull in Fleet Street. I am naturally inclined to hypochondria, but in London it vanishes, like all other ills. Often, when I have felt a weariness or distaste at home, have I rushed out into her crowded Strand, and fed my humor, till tears have wetted my cheek for unutterable sympathies with the multitudinous moving picture, which she never fails to present at all hours, like the scenes of a shifting pantomime.

The very deformities of London, which give distaste to others, from habit do not displease me. The endless succession of shops where Fancy mis-called Folly is supplied with perpetual gauds and toys, excite in me no puritanical aversion. I gladly behold every appetite supplied with its proper food. The obliging customer, and the obliged tradesman—things which live by bowing, and things which exist but for homage—do not affect me with disgust; from habit I perceive nothing but urbanity, where other men, more refined, discover meanness: I love the very smoke of London, because it has been the medium most familiar to my vision. I see grand principles of honor at work in the dirty ring which encompasses two combatants with fists, and principles of no less eternal justice in the detection of a pickpocket. The salutary astonishment with which an execution is surveyed convinces me more forcibly than a hundred volumes of abstract polity that the universal instinct of man in all ages has leaned to order and good government.

• • • • •  
Where has spleen her food but in London? Humor, Interest, Curiosity, suck at her measureless breasts without a possibility of being satiated. Nursed amid her noise, her crowds, her beloved smoke, what have I been doing all my life, if I have not lent out my heart with usury to such scenes!

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

Charles Lamb was not like Sir William Temple, who placidly wrote: "I have passed five years without ever once going to town, though I am almost in sight of it, and have a house there always ready to receive me. Nor has this been any sort of affectation, as some have thought it, but a mere want of desire or humor to make so small a remove."

### But Elia:

I miss the cheerful cries of London, the music, and the ballad-singers—the buzz and stirring murmur of the streets. Prints, pictures, all the glittering and endless succession of knacks and gewgaws, and ostentatiously displayed wares of tradesmen, which make a week-day saunter through the less busy parts of the metropolis so delightful—are shut out. No bookstalls deliciously to idle over—no busy faces to recreate the idle man who contemplates them ever passing by—the very face of business a charm.

Thus Elia feels his home instinct. His mother:  
O, my dear mother, O thou dear dead saint!  
Where's now that placid face, where oft hath sat  
A mother's smile, to think her son should thrive  
In this bad world, when she was dead and gone;  
And where a tear hath sat (take shame, O son!)  
When that same child has proved himself unkind.

### His father:

A palsy-smitten, childish, old, old man,  
A semblance most forlorn of what he was,  
A merry cheerful man. A merrier man,  
A man more apt to frame matter for mirth,  
Mad jokes and antics for a Christmas eve;  
Making life social, and the laggard time  
To move on nimbly, never yet did cheer  
The little circle of domestic friends,

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

He was a man of an incorrigible and losing honesty. A good fellow, withal, and "would strike." In the cause of the oppressed he never considered inequalities, or calculated the number of his opponents. He once wrested a sword out of the hand of a man of quality that had drawn upon him, and pommelled him severely with the hilt of it. The swordsman had offered insult to a female—an occasion upon which no odds against him could have prevented the interference of Lovel. He would stand next day bareheaded to the same person, modestly to excuse his interference—for L. never forgot rank, where something better was not concerned. L. was the liveliest little fellow breathing, had a face as gay as Garrick's, whom he was said greatly to resemble (I have a portrait of him which confirms it), possessed a fine turn for humorous poetry—next to Swift and Prior—molded heads in clay or plaster of Paris to admiration, by the dint of natural genius merely; turned cribbage boards, and such small cabinet toys, to perfection; took a hand at quadrille or bowls with equal facility; made punch better than any man of his degree in England; had the merriest quips and conceits, and was altogether as brimful of rogueries and inventions as you could desire. He was a brother of the angler, moreover, and just such a free, hearty, honest companion as Mr. Izaak Walton would have chosen to go a-fishing with. I saw him in his old age and the decay of his faculties, palsy-smitten, in the last sad stage of human weakness, "a remnant most forlorn of what he was"; yet even then his eye would light up upon the mention of his favorite Garrick. He was the greatest, he would say, in Bayes—"was upon the stage nearly throughout the whole performance, and as busy as a bee." At intervals too he would speak of his former life, and how he came up a little boy from Lincoln to go to service, and how his mother cried at parting with him, and how he returned after some few years' absence, in his smart new livery to see her, and she blessed herself

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

at the change, and could hardly be brought to believe that it was "her own bairn." And then, the excitement subduing, he would weep, till I have wished that sad second childhood might have a mother still to lay its head upon her lap. But the common mother of us all in no long time after received him gently into hers.

This is his old father Elia has memory of—dear Elia who is unraveling into beauty certain peculiarities of this very shy and retiring character! He says the little best he knew about his selfish brother John:

John, you were figuring in the gay career  
Of blooming manhood with a young man's joy,  
When I was yet a little peevish boy—  
Though time has made the difference disappear  
Betwixt our ages, which then seem'd so great—  
And still by rightful custom you retain,  
Much of the old authoritative strain,  
And keep the elder brother up in state,  
O! you do well in this.

"I was a lonely child," he sighs in reminiscence. "I was here as in a lonely temple. Snug firesides—the low-built roof—parlors ten feet by ten—frugal boards, and all the homeliness of home—these were the condition of my birth—the wholesome soil which I was planted in. Yet, without impeachment to their tenderest lessons, I am not sorry to have had glances of something beyond; and to have taken, if but a peep, in childhood, at the contrasting accidents of a great fortune."

I was a poor, friendless boy. My parents, and those who should care for me, were far away. Those

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

few acquaintances of theirs, which they could reckon upon being kind to me in the great city, after a little forced notice, which they had the grace to take of me on my first arrival in town, soon grew tired of my holiday visits. They seemed to them to recur too often, though I thought them few enough; and, one after another, they all failed me, and I felt myself alone among six hundred playmates.

O the cruelty of separating a poor lad from his early homestead! The yearnings which I used to have toward it in those unfledged years! How, in my dreams would my native town (far in the west) come back, with its church, and trees, and faces! How I would wake weeping, and in the anguish of my heart exclaim upon sweet Calne in Wiltshire!

To this late hour of my life I trace impressions left by the recollection of those friendless holidays. The long warm days of summer never return but they bring with them a gloom from the haunting memory of those whole-day-leaves, when, by some strange arrangement, we were turned for the live-long day, upon our own hands, whether we had friends to go to or none. I remember those bathing excursions to the New River, which L. recalls with such relish, better, I think, than he can, for he was a home-seeking lad, and did not much care for such water pastimes. How merrily we would sally forth into the fields, and strip under the first warmth of the sun, and wanton like young dace in the streams, getting us appetites for noon, which those of us that were penniless (our scanty morning crust long since exhausted) had not the means of allaying, while the cattle, and the birds, and the fishes, were at feed about us, and we had nothing to satisfy our cravings; the very beauty of the day, and the exercise of the pastime, and the sense of liberty, setting a keener edge upon them! How faint and languid, finally, we would return, toward nightfall, to our desired morsel, half-rejoicing, half-reluctant, that the hours of our uneasy liberty had expired!

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

It was worse in the days of winter, to go prowling about the streets objectless, shivering at cold windows of print-shops, to extract a little amusement.

As he hears children:

The noises of children, playing their own fancies—as I now hearken to them by fits, sporting on the green before my window, while I am engaged in these grave speculations at my neat suburban retreat at Shacklewell—by distance made more sweet, inexpressibly take from the labor of my task. It is like writing to music. They seem to modulate my periods. They ought at least to do so, for in the voice of that tender age there is a kind of poetry, far unlike the harsh prose-accents of man's conversation.

Or this child-man:

His life was formal. His actions seemed ruled with a ruler. He made the best executor in the world. He would swear. With all this there was about him a sort of timidity—(his few enemies used to give it a worse name)—a something which, in reverence to the dead, we will place, if you please, a little on this side of the heroic. Nature certainly had been pleased to endow John Tipp with a sufficient measure of the principle of self-preservation. There is a cowardice which we do not despise, because it has nothing base or treacherous in its elements. It betrays itself, not you; it is mere temperament; the absence of the romantic and the enterprising; it sees a lion in the way, and will not, with Fortinbras, "greatly find quarrel in a straw," when some supposed honor is at stake. Tipp never mounted the box of a stagecoach in his life; or leaned against the rails of a balcony; or walked upon the ridge of a parapet; or looked down a precipice; or let off a gun; or went upon a water-party; or would willingly let you go if he could have helped it: neither was it recorded of him, that for lucre, or for intimidation, he ever forsook friend or principle.

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

In a degree beneath manhood, it is my infirmity to look back upon those early days. Do I advance a paradox when I say that, skipping over the intervention of forty years, a man may have leave to love *himself* without the imputation of self-love?

If I know aught of myself, no one whose mind is introspective—and mine is painfully so—can have less respect for his present identity, than I have for the man Elia. I know him to be light, and vain, and humorous, a notorious . . . ; addicted to . . . ; adverse from counsel, neither taking it, nor offering it; . . . a stammering buffoon; what you will; lay it on and spare not; I subscribe to it all, and much more, than thou canst be willing to lay at his door; but for the child Elia—the “other me,” there, in the background—I must take leave to cherish the remembrance of that young master, with as little reference, I protest, to this stupid changeling of five and forty, as if it had been a child of some other house, and not of my parents. I can cry over its patient smallpox at five, and rougher medicaments; I can lay its poor fevered head upon the sick pillow at Christ’s, and wake with it in surprise at the gentle posture of maternal tenderness hanging over it, that unknown had watched its sleep. I know how it shrank from any the least color of falsehood—God help thee, Elia, how thou art changed! Thou art sophisticated—I know how honest, how courageous (for a weakling) it was, how religious, how imaginative, how hopeful! From what have I not fallen, if the child I remember was indeed myself, and not some dissembling guardian, presenting a false identity, to give the rule to my unpracticed steps, and regulate the tone of my moral being!

In “Modern Gallantry” we shall find what a Chevalier Bayard Elia was:

I shall believe it, when Dorimant hands a fish-wife across the kennel; or assists the apple-woman

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

to pick up her wandering fruit, which some unlucky dray has just dissipated.

I shall believe it when the Dorimants in humbler life, who would be thought in their way notable adepts in this refinement, shall act upon it in places where they are not known, or think themselves not observed, when I shall see the traveler for some rich tradesman part with his admired box coat to spread it over the defenseless shoulders of the poor woman, who is passing to her parish on the roof of the same stage-coach with him, drenched in the rain.

Lastly, I shall begin to believe that there is some such principle influencing our conduct when more than one half of the drudgery and coarse servitude of the world shall cease to be performed by women.

Joseph Paice, of Bread Street Hill, merchant, and one of the directors of the South Sea Company—the same to whom Edwards, the Shakespeare commentator, has addressed a fine sonnet—was the only pattern of consistent gallantry I have met with. He took me under his shelter at an early age, and bestowed some pains upon me. I owe to his precepts and example whatever there is of the man of business (and that is not much) in my composition. It was not his fault that I did not profit more. Though bred a Presbyterian, and brought up a merchant, he was the finest gentleman of his time. He had not one system of attention to females in the drawing-room, and another in the shop, or at the stall. I do not mean that he made no distinction. But he never lost sight of sex, or overlooked it in the casualties of a disadvantageous situation. I have seen him stand bareheaded—smile if you please—to a poor servant girl, while she has been inquiring of him the way to some street—in such a posture of unforced civility as neither to embarrass her in the acceptance nor himself in the offer of it. He was no dangler, in the common acceptation of the word, after women; but he reverenced and upheld, in every form in which it came before him, womanhood. I have seen him

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

—nay, smile not—tenderly escorting a market-woman, whom he had encountered in a shower, exalting his umbrella over her poor basket of fruit, that it might receive no damage, with as much carefulness as if she had been a countess. To the reverend form of Female Eld he would yield the wall (though it were an ancient beggar woman) with more ceremony than we can afford to show a grandame.

Of Joseph Paice did Elia write this gracious epitaph; but I wonder could Elia have been mistaken and was not this quiet, scholarly Elia wrong? I, truly, think it of him.

His garments, “Now black has been my ordinary apparel so long—indeed I take it to be the proper costume of an author—the stage sanctions it—that to have appeared in some lighter color would have raised more mirth at my expense than the anomaly had created censure. I go about in black,” he says. His was a somber look.

He was for household sounds. “Not any sounds in life exceed in interest a knock at the door.” That is Elia forever. “The truth will out. There is nothing which I dread so much as the being left alone for a quarter of an hour with a sensible, well-informed man, that does not know me.”

He is immethodical:

My reading has been lamentably desultory and immethodical. Odd, out of the way, old English plays and treatises have supplied me with most of my notions and ways of feeling. In every thing that relates to science I am a whole encyclopædia behind the rest of the world. I should have scarcely cut

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

a figure among the franklins, or country gentlemen, in King John's days. I know less geography than a schoolboy of six weeks' standing. To me a map of old Ortelius is as authentic as Arrowsmith. I do not know whereabout Africa merges into Asia; whether Ethiopia lie in one or other of those great divisions; nor can form the remotest conjecture of the position of New South Wales, or Van Diemen's Land. Yet I do hold a correspondence with a very dear friend in the first-named of these two *Terre Incognitae*. I have no astronomy. I do not know where to look for the Bear, or Charles's Wain; the place of any star; or the name of any of them at sight. I guess at Venus only by her brightness—and if the sun on some portentous morn were to make his first appearance in the West, I verily believe, that, while all the world were gasping in apprehension about me, I alone should stand unterrified, from sheer incuriosity and want of observation. Of history and chronology I possess some vague points, such as one cannot help picking up in the course of miscellaneous study; but I never deliberately sat down to a chronicle, even of my own country. I have most dim apprehensions of the four great monarchies; and sometimes the Assyrian, sometimes the Persian, floats as first in my fancy. I make the widest conjectures concerning Egypt, and her shepherd kings.

I am a stranger to the shapes and texture of the commonest trees, herbs, flowers, not from the circumstance of my being townborn, for I should have brought the same inobservant spirit into the world with me had I first seen in "on Devon's leafy shores," and am no less at loss among purely town objects—tools, engines, mechanic processes. Not that I affect ignorance, but my head has not many mansions, nor spacious; and I have been obliged to fill it with such cabinet curiosities as it can hold without aching. I sometimes wonder how I have passed my probation with so little discredit in the world,

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

as I have done, upon so meager a stock. But the fact is a man may do very well with a very little knowledge, and scarce be found out, in mixed company; everybody is so much more ready to produce his own than to call for a display of your acquisitions.

I am naturally, beforehand, shy of novelties; new books, new faces, new years, from some mental twist which makes it difficult for me to face the prospective. I have almost ceased to hope, and am sanguine only in the prospects of other (former) years. I plunge into foregone visions and conclusions. I encounter pell-mell with past disappointments. I am armor-proof against old discouragements. I forgive, or overcome in fancy, old adversaries. I play over again for love, as the gamesters phrase it, games, for which I once paid so dear, I would scarce now have any of those untoward accidents and events of my life reversed. I would no more alter them than the incidents of some well-contrived novel. Methinks it is better that I should have pined away seven of my goldenest years when I was thrall to the fair hair, and fairer eyes, of Alice W—n than that so passionate a love adventure should be lost. It was better that our family should have missed that legacy, which old Dorrell cheated us of, than that I should have at this moment two thousand pounds in banco and be without the idea of that specious old rogue.

I love Quaker ways, and Quaker worship. I venerate the Quaker principles. It does me good for the rest of the day when I meet any of their people in my path. When I am ruffled or disturbed by any occurrence the sight, or quiet voice of a Quaker, acts upon me as a ventilator, lightening the air, and taking off a load from the bosom. But I cannot like the Quakers (as Desdemona would say) "to live with them." I am all over sophisticated—with humors, fancies, craving hourly sympathy. I must have books, pictures, theaters, chit-chat, scandal, jokes, ambiguities, and a thousand whim-whams, which their simpler

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

taste can do without. I should starve at their primitive banquet.

Of all sound of all bells—(bells, the music highest bordering upon heaven)—most solemn and touching is the peal which rings out the Old Year. I never hear it without a gathering-up of my mind to a concentration of all the images that have been diffused over the past twelvemonth; all I have done or suffered, performed or neglected—in that regretted time. I begin to know its worth, as when a person dies.

He is born lover of life.

In proportion as the years lessen and shorten I set more count upon their periods and would fain lay my ineffectual finger upon the spoke of the great wheel. I am not content to pass away “like a weaver’s shuttle.” Those metaphors solace me not, nor sweeten the unpalatable draught of mortality. I care not to be carried with the tide, that smoothly bears human life to eternity; and reluct at the inevitable course of destiny. I am in love with this green earth, the face of town and country; the unspeakable rural solitudes, and the sweet security of streets. I would set up my tabernacle here. I am content to stand still at the age to which I am arrived; I, and my friends.

Shall I enjoy friendships there, wanting the smiling indications which point me to them here—the recognizable face—the “sweet assurance of a look”?

In winter this intolerable disinclination to dying—to give it its mildest name—does more especially haunt and beset me. In a genial August noon, beneath a sweltering sky, death is almost problematic. At those times do such poor snakes as myself enjoy an immortality. Then we expand and burgeon. Then are we as strong again, as valiant again, as wise again, and a great deal taller. The blast that nips and shrinks me puts me in thoughts of death. All things allied to the insubstantial, wait upon that master feeling; cold, numbness, dreams, perplexity; moonlight itself, with its shadowy and spectral appear-

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

ances—that cold ghost of the sun, or Phœbus' sickly sister, like that innutritious one denounced in the Canticles;—I hold with the Persian.

Whatsoever thwarts or puts me out of my way, brings death into my mind. All partial evils, like humors, run into that capital plague-sore. I have heard some profess an indifference to life. Such hail the end of their existence as a port of refuge; and speak of the grave as of some soft arms, in which they may slumber as on a pillow. Some have wooed death—but upon thee, I say, thou foul ugly phantom!

That last game I had with my sweet cousin (I capotted her)—(dare I tell thee how foolish I am?) —I wished it might have lasted forever, though we gained nothing, and lost nothing, though it was a mere shade of play: I would be content to go on in that idle folly forever. The pipkin should be ever boiling that was to prepare the gentle lenitive to my foot, which Bridget was doomed to apply after the game was over; and as I do not much relish appliances, there it should ever bubble. Bridget and I should be ever playing.

He hath scant music in him:

I even think that sentimentally I am disposed to harmony. But organically I am incapable of a tune. I have been practising “God save the King” all my life; whistling and humming it over to myself in solitary corners; and am not yet arrived, they tell me, within many quavers of it. Yet hath the loyalty of Elia never been impeached.

I am not without suspicion that I have an undeveloped faculty of music within me. For, thrumming, in my wild way, on my friend A’s piano, the other morning, while he was engaged in an adjoining parlor, on his return he was pleased to say, he thought “it could not be the maid!” On his first surprise at hearing the keys touched in somewhat an airy and masterful way, not dreaming of me, his suspicions had lighted

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

on Jenny. But a grace snatched from a superior refinement soon convinced him that some being—technically perhaps deficient, but higher informed from a principle common to all fine arts—had swayed the keys to a mood which Jenny, with all her (less-cultivated) enthusiasm, could never have elicited from them. I mention this as a proof of my friend's penetration, and not with any view of disparaging Jenny.

I am constitutionally susceptible of noises. A carpenter's hammer, in a warm summer noon, will fret me into more than midsummer's madness. But those unconnected, unset sounds are nothing to the measured malice of music. The ear is passive to those single strokes; willingly enduring stripes, while it hath no task to con. To music it cannot be passive. It will strive—mine at least will—spite of its inaptitude, to thrid the maze, like an unskilled eye painfully poring upon hieroglyphics. I have sat through an Italian opera, till, for sheer pain and inexplicable anguish, I have rushed out into the noisiest places of the crowded streets, to solace myself with sounds which I was not obliged to follow, and get rid of the distracting torment of endless, fruitless, barren attention! I take refuge in the unpretending assemblage of honest common-life sounds. While I proceed in the opposite direction tuneless.

### He loveth the fool:

I love a fool as naturally as if I were kith and kin to him.

Many happy returns of this day to you—and you—and you, sir—nay, never frown, man, nor put a long face upon the matter. Do not we know one another? What need of ceremony among friends? We have all a touch of that same—you understand me—a speck of the motley. Beshrew the man who on such a day as this, the general festival, should affect to stand aloof. I am none of those sneakers. I am free of the corporation, and care not who knows

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

it. He that meets me in the forest to-day shall meet with no wiseacre, I can tell him. *Stultus sum.* Translate me that, and take the meaning of it to yourself for your pains.

Fill us a cup of that sparkling gooseberry—we will drink no wise, melancholy, politic port on this day—and let us troll the catch of Amiens—*duc ad me—duc as me*—how goes it?

“Here shall he see  
Gross fools as he.”

Now I would give a trifle to know historically and authentically who was the greatest fool that ever lived. I would certainly give him in a bumper. Marry, of the present breed, I think I could without much difficulty name you the party.

Remove your cap a little further if you please; it hides my bauble. And now each man bestride his hobby, and dust away his bells to what tune he pleases.

Good master Empedocles, you are welcome. It is long since you went a salamander-gathering down Ætna.

He is drawn to the lowliest:

I like to meet a sweep: understand me, not a grown sweeper—old chimney sweepers are by no means attractive—but one of those tender novices, blooming through their first nigritude, the maternal washings not quite effaced from the cheek—such as come forth with the dawn, or somewhat earlier, with their little professional notes sounding like the *peep peep* of a young sparrow; or liker to the main lark should I pronounce them, in their aerial ascents not seldom anticipating the sun-rise?

I have a kindly yearning toward these dim specks—poor blots—innocent blacknesses.

Here, Elia, sit for your portrait:

And how he used to carry me upon his back when I

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

was a lame-footed boy—for he was a good bit older than me—many a mile when I could not walk for pain; and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient, and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first; but afterward it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long and knew not till then how much I had loved him.

Kind, gentle Elia man:

I do not know what business I have to be present in solemn places. I cannot divest me of an unseasonable disposition to levity upon the most awful occasions. I was never cut out for a public functionary. Ceremony and I have long shaken hands; but I could not resist the importunities of the young lady's father, whose gout unhappily confined him at home, to act as parent on this occasion, and give away the bride. Something ludicrous occurred to me at this most serious of all moments—a sense of my unfitness to have the disposal, even in imagination, of the sweet young creature beside me. I fear I was betrayed to some lightness, for the awful eye of the parson—and the rector's eye of Saint Mildred's in the Poultry is no trifle of a rebuke—was upon me in an instant, souring my incipient jest to the tristful severities of a funeral.

Charles Lamb was ever a lover of books—in libraries or out—in his own house or on the shelves (second-hand shelves indefinitely preferable) of

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

book stalls. But ever books—to fumble over; loiter over, mouse in, smell the pages of, covet, possess—books! Few who have written on this enchanting theme have come unto it from so right an angle, and have delivered their souls with such quaint felicity and in such aromatic wonder. We get it here the flavor of a book and say grace when the volume is in our hand. He has that gusto for the old without which no one ever can become an out-and-out book-lover. In Oxenford he eyes refectories in which are “spits which have cooked for Chaucer.” Out of such sense of the eld we shall not fail to derive a rare book-lover.

He loafers through a library.

Above all thy rarities, old Oxenford, what do most arride and solace me, are thy repositories of moldering learning, thy shelves—

What a place to be in is an old library! It seems as though all the souls of all the writers that have bequeathed their labors to these Bodleians were reposing here, as in some dormitory, or middle state. I do not want to handle, to profane the leaves, their winding sheets. I could as soon dislodge a shade. I seem to inhale learning, walking amid their foliage, and the odor of their old moth-scented coverings is fragrant as the first bloom of those scintial apples which grew amid the happy orchard.

He loves vagabondia. “Odd, out-of-the-way, old English treatises” tease him to love them and not in vain. “Get the writings of John Woolman by heart,” says hortatory Elia, with a shabby volume of John Woolman’s Journal in

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

his hand. I could show Elia a thing about this aforesaid John Woolman'a Journal which would make his clerky fingers tingle. John Woolman's Journal, printed by the Essex House Press and bound in snowy vellum, and printed on hand-made paper beautiful enough to write on it a love letter to Rosamund Gray—or Hester. I am a-thinking that myself am eager enough lover of John Woolman's Journal to have suited illucid Elia, partial to Oxenford and John Woolman and John Woolman's book, but unschooled to care for John Wesley and untutored in John Wesley's Journal, one of the wonderful books written of human hands. And if Elia inclined to stammer he had taught me to love Woolman and his Journal, I shall have to defy him to his face. I learned this lore as Elia learned it, by reading what John Woolman with his quaint thought wrote.

Or who that ever loved and lugged and hugged a folio, but could cry "Selah!" when Elia apostrophizes, "And you, my midnight darlings—my Folios! [and remark how he spells 'folio'—with a capital F] 'huge armfuls'—Selah!" And stutters, something not articulate about "intense delight of having you in my embrace," nor takes kindly to a ghostly state in which we shall be informed by intuition, "and no longer by this familiar process of reading" (two selahs—or a dozen—slip not this selahing. "Let me have books to carry," thought Elia. I want no bookless state, neither).

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

Elia grows angered when he casts a glance in the face of borrowers and not returners—"I mean your borrowers of books—those mutilators of collections, spoilers of the symmetry of shelves, and creators of odd volumes." His heart is ever where his treasures are, and his treasures are books. "To one like Elia, whose treasures are rather cased in leather covers than closed in iron coffers."

He loved Ike Walton and his "Complete Angler." "There [pointing to an empty nook in his library] loitered the Complete Angler." And I wonder what Ike Waltonite stole away with—not to speak plainly—stole it? "The slight vacuum" where once a book *was*, but where no book *is*, sorely vexes Elia. But for his stammering he might speak words better not uttered. And his cry, in looking at a vacuum, "Was there not Zimmerman on Solitude?" (the cry wailed out in italics) enough to raise an insurrection in the breast of every lover of a book?

"Old tomes, half-faded," bid him tarry—nor in vain. What unaffected grieving is in his voice when he contemplates this catastrophe, "No bookstalls deliciously to idle over!" (Altogether right, Elia—that were calamity grown calamitous.) Elia observes, "You cannot make a pet of a book of an author everybody reads" (Selah, or semi-selah—which?) He is a bookman. (He out-Lowells Lowell who said, "I am a bookman.")

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

At the hazard of losing some credit on this head, I must confess that I dedicate no inconsiderable portion of my time to other people's thoughts. I dream away my life in others' speculations. I love to lose myself in other men's minds. When I am not walking, I am reading; I cannot sit and think. Books think for me.

I have no repugnances. Shaftesbury is not too genteel for me, nor Jonathan Wild too low. I can read anything which I call a *book*. There are things in that shape which I cannot allow for such.

In this catalogue of books which are no books—*biblia a-biblia*—I reckon Court Calendars, Directories, Pocket Books (the Literary excepted), Draught Boards bound and lettered at the back, Scientific Treatises, Almanacks, Statutes at Large; the works of Hume, Gibbon, Robertson, Beattie, Soame Jenyns, and, generally, all those volumes which “no gentleman’s library should be without”: the Histories of Flavius Josephus (that learned Jew), and Paley’s Moral Philosophy. With these exceptions, I can read almost anything. I bless my stars for a taste so catholic, so unexcluding.

I confess that it moves my spleen to see these things in books’ clothing perched upon shelves, like false saints, usurpers of true shrines, intruders into the sanctuary, thrusting out the legitimate occupants. To reach down a well-bound semblance of a volume, and hope it some kind-hearted play-book, then, opening what “seem its leaves,” to come bolt upon a withering Population Essay. To expect a Steele, or a Farquhar, and find—Adam Smith. To view a well-arranged assortment of block-headed Encyclopædias (Anglicanas or Metropolitanas) set out in an array of Russia, or Morocco, when a tithe of that good leather would comfortably reclothe my shivering folios; would renovate Paracelsus himself, and enable old Raymund Lully to look like himself again in the world—I never see these impostors, but I long to strip them, to warm my ragged veterans in their spoils.

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

To be strong-backed and neat-bound is the desideratum of a volume. Magnificence comes after. This, when it can be afforded, is not to be lavished upon all kinds of books indiscriminately. I would not dress a set of Magazines, for instance, in full suit. The deshabille, or half-binding (with Russia backs ever) is our costume. A Shakespeare, or a Milton (unless the first editions), it were mere foppery to trick out in gay apparel. The possession of them confers no distinction. The exterior of them (the things themselves being so common), strange to say, raises no sweet emotions, no tickling sense of property in the owner. Thomson's Seasons, again, looks best (I maintain it) a little torn and dog's-eared. How beautiful to a genuine lover of reading are the sullied leaves, and worn-out appearance, nay, the very odor (beyond Russia), if we would not forget kind feelings in fastidiousness, of an old "Circulating Library" Tom Jones, or Vicar of Wakefield! How they speak of the thousand thumbs that have turned over their pages with delight!—of the lone sempstress, whom they may have cheered (milliner, or harder-working mantua-maker) after her long day's needle-toil, running far into midnight, when she has snatched an hour, ill spared from sleep, to steep her cares, as in some Lethean cup, in spelling out their enchanting contents! Who would have them a whit less soiled?

In some respects the better a book is the less it demands from binding. Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, and all that class of perpetually self-reproductive volumes—Great Nature's Stereotypes—we see them individually perish with less regret, because we knew the copies of them to be "eterne." But where a book is at once both good and rare—where the individual is almost the species, and when that perishes,

"We know not where is that Promethean torch  
That can its light relumine"—

such a book, for instance, as the Life of the Duke

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

of Newcastle, by his Duchess—no casket is rich enough, no casing sufficiently durable, to honor and keep safe such a jewel.

Not only rare printed volumes of this description, which seem hopeless ever to be reprinted, but old editions of writers, such as Sir Philip Sydney, Bishop Taylor, Milton in his prose works, Fuller—of whom we have reprints, yet the books themselves, though they go about, and are talked of here and there, we know, have not endenized themselves (nor possibly ever will) in the national heart, so as to become stock books—it is good to possess these in durable and costly covers. I do not care for a first folio of Shakespeare. You cannot make a pet book of an author whom everybody reads. I rather prefer the common editions of Rowe and Tonson, without notes, and with plates, which, being so execrably bad, serve as maps, or modest remembrancers, to the text; and without pretending to any supposable emulation with it, are so much better than the Shakespeare gallery *engravings*, which *did*. I have a community of feeling with my countrymen about his Plays, and I like those editions of him best which have been oftenest tumbled about and handled. On the contrary, I cannot read Beaumont and Fletcher but in folio. The Octavo editions are painful to look at. I have no sympathy with them. If they were as much read as the current editions of the other poet, I should prefer them in that shape to the older one. I do not know a more heartless sight than the reprint of the Anatomy of Melancholy. What need was there of unearthing the bones of that fantastic old great man, to expose them to a winding sheet of the newest fashion to modern censure?

Shall I be thought fantastical if I confess that the names of some of our poets sound sweeter, and have a finer relish to the ear—to mine at least—than that of Milton or of Shakespeare? It may be that the latter are more stale and rung upon in common

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

discourse? The sweetest names, and which carry a perfume in the mention, are, Kit Marlowe, Drayton, Drummond of Hawthornden, and Cowley.

Much depends upon *when* and *where* you read a book. In the five or six impatient minutes, before the dinner is quite ready, who would think of taking up the Faerie Queene for a stop-gap, or a volume of Bishop Andrewes' sermons?

Milton almost requires a solemn service of music to be played before you enter upon him. But he brings his music, to which, who listens, had need bring docile thoughts, and purged ears.

Winter evenings—the world shut out—with less of ceremony the gentle Shakespeare enters. At such a season, the Tempest, or his own Winter's Tale—

These two poets you cannot avoid reading aloud—to yourself, or (as it chances) to some single person listening. More than one—and it degenerates into an audience.

And Elia has caught the fitness of reading things when he says, "I should not care to be caught in the serious avenues of some cathedral alone, and reading Candide." You were never more accurate in any judgment of your life, right Elia! But good friends must part company in some opinions. I love not to differ from any book lover's mood, nor would I differ from Elia; but he must not be listened to when he says, "I am not much a friend to out-of-door reading." When else should a body read "As You Like It," and "Lorna Doone," and "The Tempest," and "The Shep-hearde's Calendar"? Elia, thou didst not enough love the out-of-doors. Where but by a river flowing quietly should "The Complete Angler" be read? Now, Elia, dost thou stand reproved?

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

I own that I am disposed to say grace upon twenty other occasions in the course of the day besides my dinner. I want a form for setting out upon a pleasant walk, for a moonlight ramble, for a friendly meeting, or a solved problem. Why have we none for books, those spiritual repasts—a grace before Milton—a grace before Shakespeare—a devotional exercise proper to be said before reading the *Faerie Queene*?

Good Elia, thou hast spoken well.

He was ever covetous of leisure. In “The Superannuated Man” he has poured out his soul. Let him. “I was fifty years of age and no prospect of emancipation presented itself. I had grown to my desk, as it were. And the wood had entered my soul.” When a partner in the East India House parleyed about the expediency of retiring, “How my heart panted!” is what Elia sets down. When his life-time holiday began he stammers, “I stammered out a bow.” Thus he gloats on his manumission:

For the first two days I felt stunned, overwhelmed. I could only apprehend my felicity; I was too confused to taste it sincerely. I wandered about, thinking I was happy, and knowing that I was not. I was in the condition of a prisoner in the old Bastile, suddenly let loose after a forty years’ confinement. I could scarce trust myself with myself. It was like passing out of Time into Eternity—for it is a sort of Eternity for a man to have his Time all to himself. It seemed to me that I had more time on my hands than I could ever manage. From a poor man, poor in Time, I was suddenly lifted up into a vast revenue; I could see no end of my possessions; I wanted some steward, or judicious bailiff, to manage my estates in time for me. And here let me caution persons

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

grown old in active business, not lightly, nor without weighing their own resources, to forego their customary employment all at once, for there may be danger in it. I feel it myself, but I know that my resources are sufficient; and now that those first giddy raptures have subsided, I have a quiet home-feeling of the blessedness of my condition. I am in no hurry. Having all holidays, I am as though I had none. If time hung heavy upon me, I could walk it away; but I do *not* walk all day long, as I used to in those old transient holidays, thirty miles a day, to make the most of them. If time were troublesome, I could read it away, but I do *not* read in that violent measure, with which, having no time my own but candle-light time, I used to weary out my head and eyesight in bygone winters. I walk, read, or scribble (as now) just when the fit seizes me. I no longer hunt after pleasure; I let it come to me. I am like the man

“... that’s born, and has his years come to him,  
In some green desert.”

“Years,” you will say! “What is this superannuated simpleton calculating upon? He has already told us he is past fifty.”

I have indeed lived nominally fifty years, but deduct out of them the hours which I have lived to other people, and not to myself, and you will find me still a young fellow. For that is the only true time which a man can properly call his own, that which he has all to himself.

Nevertheless, this width of leisure was mainly unproductive. His retirement from business took place in 1825. But “Elia” was printed in 1823. And “The Last Essays of Elia” were published in 1833, and some of them had been penned before 1825. So that the longed-for leisure was a bog

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

wherein Elia wandered, nor wandered out of. The clerkship cannot, in the light of this, be set down as calamitous. Genius is no child of leisure—rather, a child of toil. Elia required a goad. Let no Eliae lament the East India House and the MSS. clerk Charles Lamb left there. It was better so. Leisure is twin to idleness.

Elia was poor. I apprehend that the essay, “Barbara S—” is a woman of Elia’s own family—the story of his own battle to make ends meet and be a man. And who of all his companions in poverty has ever told the delights of being poor half so aptly as he in “Old China”? This is poverty set to a tune which refuses to surcease from music.

“I wish the good old times would come again,” she said, “when we were not quite so rich. I do not mean that I want to be poor; but there was a middle state”—so she was pleased to ramble on—“in which I am sure we were a great deal happier. A purchase is but a purchase, now that you have money enough and to spare. Formerly it used to be a triumph. When we coveted a cheap luxury (and O! how much ado I had to get you to consent in those times!) we were used to have a debate two or three days before, and to weigh the *for* and *against*, and think what we might spare out of, and what saving we could hit upon, that should be an equivalent. A thing was worth buying then, when we felt the money that we paid for it.

“Do you remember the brown suit which you made to hang upon you till all your friends cried shame upon you, it grew so threadbare—and all because of that folio Beaumont and Fletcher, which you dragged home late at night from Barker’s in Covent Garden? Do you remember how we eyed it for weeks before

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

we could make up our minds to the purchase, and had not come to a determination till it was near ten o'clock of the Saturday night, when you set off from Islington, fearing you should be too late, and when the old book-seller with some grumbling opened his shop, and by the twinkling taper (for he was setting bedward) lighted out the relic from his dusty treasures, and when you lugged it home, wishing it were twice as cumbersome, and when you presented it to me, and when we were exploring the perfectness of it (collating you called it), and while I was repairing some of the loose leaves with paste, which your impatience would not suffer to be left till daybreak—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? or can those neat black clothes which you wear now, and are so careful to keep brushed, since we have become rich and finical, give you half the honest vanity with which you flaunted it about in that over-worn suit, your old corbeau, for four or five weeks longer than you should have done, to pacify your conscience for the mighty sum of fifteen—or sixteen shillings was it?—a great affair we thought it then, which you had lavished on the old folio. Now you can afford to buy any book that pleases you, but I do not see that you ever bring me home any nice old purchases now.

“When you came home with twenty apologies for laying out a less number of shillings upon that print after Leonardo, which we christened ‘Lady Blanche’; when you looked at the purchase, and thought of the money—and thought of the money, and looked again at the picture—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? Now, you have nothing to do but to walk into Colnaghi’s, and buy a wilderness of Leonards. Yet do you?

“Then, do you remember our pleasant walks to Enfield, and Potter’s Bar, and Waltham, when we had a holiday—holidays, and all other fun, are gone, now we are rich—and the little hand-basket in which I used to deposit our day’s fare of savory cold lamb

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

and salad, and how you would pry about at noon-tide for some decent house, where we might go in, and produce our store, only paying for the ale that you must call for, and speculate upon the looks of the landlady, and whether she was likely to allow us a tablecloth, and wish for such another honest hostess, as Izaak Walton has described many a one on the pleasant banks of the Lea, when he went a-fishing, and sometimes they would prove obliging enough, and sometimes they would look grudgingly upon us, but we had cheerful looks still for one another and would eat our plain food savorily, scarcely grudging Piscator his Trout Hall?

"There was pleasure in eating, before they became quite common—in the first dish of peas, while they were yet dear—to have them for a nice supper, a treat. What treat can we have now? If we were to treat ourselves now—that is, to have dainties a little above our means—it would be selfish and wicked. It is very little more that we allow ourselves beyond what the actual poor can get, that makes what I call a treat—when two people living together, as we have done, now and then indulge themselves in a cheap luxury, which both like; while each apologizes, and is willing to take both halves of the blame to his single share. I see no harm in people making much of themselves in that sense of the word. It may give them a hint how to make much of others. But now—what I mean by the word—we never do make much of ourselves. None but the poor can do it. I do not mean the veriest poor of all, but persons as we were, just above poverty.

"I know what you were going to say, that it is mighty pleasant at the end of the year to make all meet, and much ado we used to have every Thirty-first Night of December to account for our exceedings; many a long face did you make over your puzzled accounts, and in contriving to make it out how we had spent so much, or that we had not spent so much, or that it was impossible we should spend so

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

much next year, and still we found our slender capital decreasing; but then, betwixt ways, and projects, and compromises of one sort and another, and talk of curtailing this charge, and doing without that for the future—and the hope that youth brings, and laughing spirits (in which you were never poor till now), we pocketed up our loss, and in conclusion, with ‘lusty brimmers’ (as you used to quote it out of *hearty cheerful Mr. Cotton*, as you called him), we used to welcome in the ‘coming guest.’ Now we have no reckoning at all at the end of the old year —no flattering promises about the new year doing better for us.”

Elia, thy hand. Poverty is sweet. May we each love it while we have it!

So, friend Elia, slip in quietly, when the lamp is lit. We will sin against no propriety of thine. Be gas or lightning as illuminants far from us when thou art guest of ours. Our lamp is lit, good Elia. Come in from wandering to the Strand, where the second-hand dramatists are for thy gentle fingering and irreproachable coveting, come in and let us while away an hour in stammering silence together. If thy mood be so, be silent; and again if thy mood be so, stutter out a frightened pun or a glint of poetry. But in all, have thy way. Thou art not set upon. There are no reporters here nor any half-hearted friends. There are no East India House books to be written in on the morrow. And Mary is not at home. She has no need of thee this night. Sit and watch the smoke curl from thy pipe in slow blue clouds which dream away into the shadows.

## ONCE AGAIN WITH ELIA

He is thinking of Mary. But the other night she and he amidst stern weeping went the way they had oft gone before. Two were weeping and one was Elia and under his arm was a strait-jacket and under his left breast was a breaking heart. Two weeping, and but one came back, that one weeping still. Dear Mary! Charles is thinking on thee this while. His lip quivers a little betimes; and a tear runs unnoted on his cheek and quivers a moment on his lip—and the pipe has to be relit. What a weary, sad story that brother and sister story of Charles and Mary Lamb is! It is become an imperishable treasure. It is a family secret of us all now. If half or near to all the doings of this world's storied kings were wiped from the world's recollection, we should not be visibly impoverished. Most of what they did was so feverish, so theatrical, so grimy with self as to fairly anger us now and make us snarly with those contemporaries who could be amused and awed by such cheap theatricals. They are competent now solely to waken a languid smile. But this brother-sister love of these common folk, is imperishable music. Elia wrote no essay so felicitous as his unwearying love for poor, demented Mary. That shines out like a dandelion on the strath of new springtime, a flame of yellow sunlight low against the earth. And so long as women and men love lowly loveliness, that long, quaint Elia, will thy love for Mary be leaned over, aye and wept over. Thou wast an essay wiser

## RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE

and sweeter than any thou didst pen; and the theme of the essay thou wast, was THE ART OF LOSING ONESELF, a brave and beautiful art; and amongst men I know not many equipped as thou to write this essay in thy life. This old bachelor Elia was much the mother and the father. A quaint mothering he gave and a quaint fathering, but a mothering and fathering very, very sweet. His heart was ever at the window watching as mothers are. In his sleep I think you could have heard Elia whisper, "Mary, sister, do you need Charles?"

Who can name the English lords in the days when Charles Lamb was king of the quiet poetry of the realm of sacrifice? Truly we neither know nor care. They are second-hand men of little title to renown when Elia is near. We forget them, but never him!









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